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SIR NOEL'S HEIR.

By Mrs. MAY AGNES FLEMING,

AUTHOR OF "GUY EARLSCOURT'S WHEE," "A TERRIBLE SEURBT," "A WONDERFUL WOMAN" "A MAD MARRIAGE,"
"NORINE'S REVENGE," "THE MYSTERY AT BLACKWOOD GRANGE," ETC., UTC.

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CHAPTER I.

EIR NOEL'S DEATH-BED.

The December night had closed in wet and wild around Thetford Towers. It stood down in the low ground, smothered in trees, a tall, gaunt, hoary pile of gray stone, all peaks, and gables and stacks of chimneys, and rook-infested turrets. A queer, massive, old house, built in the days of James the First, by Sir Hugo Thetford, the first baronet of the name, and as staunch and strong now as then.

The December day had been overcast and gloomy, but the December night was stormy and wild. The wind worried and wailed through the tossing trees with whistling moans and shricks that were desolately human, and made me think of the sobbing banshes of firsh legends. Far away the mighty voice of the stormy sea mingled its hoarse bass, and the rain lashed the windows in long, slanting lines. A desolate sight and a desolate scene without; more desolates still within, for on his bed, this tempestuous winter night, the last of the Thetford baronets by Qring.

winter night, the mast of the and lashing rain a groom galloped along the high road to the village at break-neck speed. His errand was to Dr. Gale, the village surgeon, which gentleman he found just preparing to go to bed.

"For God's sake, doctor!" cried the man, white as a sheet, "come with me at once! Sir

"For God's sake, doctor!" cried the man, white as a sheet, "come with me at once! Sir Noel's killed!

Noel's killed!

De stale, all bet phlegmatic, staggered back, and the stage of the st

"How did it happen?" esked the doctor, hardly able to speak for the furious pace at which they were geing. "It thought he was at Lady Stokestane's ball."

"He did go," replied the groom; "leastways he took my lady there; but he said he had a friend to meet from London at the Royal George to-night, and he rode back. We don't, none of us, know how it happened; for a better or surer rider than Sir Noel there ain't in Devonshire; but Diana must have slipped and threw him. She came galloping in by herself about half an hour ago all blown; and me and three more set off to look for Sir Noel. We found him about twenty yards from the gates, lying on his face in the mud, and as still and cold as if he was dead."

"And you brought him home and came for me?"

m the mud, and as stin and cold as if he was dead."

"And you brought him home and came for me;"

"Directly, sir. Some wanted to send word to my hady; but Mrs. Hilliard, she thought how you had best see him first, sir, so's we'd know what danger he was really in before alarming her ladyship."

"Quite right, William. Let us trust it may not be serious. Had Sir Noel been—I mean, I suppose he had been dining?"

"Well, doctor," said William, "Arneaud, that's his valey de chambre, you know, said he thought he had taken nore wine than was prudent going to Lady stokestone's ball, which her ladyship is very particular about such, you know, sir."

"Ahl that accounts," said the doctor, thoughtfully; "and now, William, my man, don't let's talk any more, for I feel completely blown already."

Ten minutes' sharp riding brought them to.

nous clouds in the darkness, and the woods on the marble hearth falled to give heat. The oak floor was overlaid with Persian rugs, the windows were draped in green elveted the chairs were upholstered in the same. Near the center of the apartment stood the bed, tall, broad, quaintly carved, curtained in green relevet, and on it, coid and lifeliess, lay the wounded man. Mrs. Hilliard, the housekeeper, sat beside him, and Arneaud, the Swiss valet, with a frightened face, stood near the fire. "Very shocking business this, Mrs. Hilliard," said the doctor, removing his hat and gloves—"very shocking. How is he? Any signs of consciousness yet?" "None whatever, sir," replied the housekeeper, rising. "I am so thankful you have come. We, none of us, knew what to do for him and it is dreadful to see him lying these like that."

She moved away, leaving the doctor to his examination. Ten minutes, fifteen, twenty passed; then Dr. Gale turned to her with a very

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Ten minutes' sharp riding brought them to the greate entrance gates of Thetford Towers. An old woman came out of a little lodge, built in the huge masonry, to admit them, and they dashed up the long winding avenue under the surging oaks and chestnuts. Five minutes more and Dr. Gale was running up a polished staircase of black, slippery oak, down an equally wide and black and slippery passage, and into the chamber where Sir Noel lay.

A grand and stately ohamber, lofty, dark and wainscoted, where the wax candles made lumi-

"What is it?" he faintly asked, "What is the matter?

"You are hurt, Sir Noel," the doctor answered, sadly; "you have been thrown from your horse. Don't attempt to move—you are

not able.

"I remember—I remember," said the young
man, a gleam of recollection lighting up his
ghastly face. "Diana slipped, and I was thrown.
How long ago is that?"

flow long ago is that?"
"About an hour."
"And I am hurt? Badly?"
He fixed his eyes with a powerful look on the doctor's face, and that good man shrunk away from the news he must tell.
"Badly?" reiterated the young baronet, in a peremptory tone, that told all of his nature.
"Alt you won't speak, I see! I am, and I fee!
—I feel. Doctor, am I going to die?"
He asked the question with a sudden wildness—a sudden horror of death, half starting up in bed. Still the doctor did not speak; still Mrs. Hilliard's suppressed sobs echoed in the stillness of the vast room.

Hilliard's suppressed sobs echoed in the stimess of the vast room.

Sir Noel Thetford fell back on his pillow, a shadow as ghastly and awful as death itself lying on his face. But he was a brave man and the descendant of a fearless race; and except for one convulsive throe that shook him from head to foot, nothing told his horror of his sudden fate. There was a weird pause. Sir Noel lay staring straight at the oaken wall, his bloodless face awful in its intensity of hidden feeling. Rain and wind outside rose higher and higher, and beat clamorously at the windows; and still above them, mighty and terrible, rose the farabove them, mighty and terrible, rose the far-off voice of the ceaseless sea.

The doctor was the first to speak, in hushed

The doctor was the first to speak, in hushed and awe-struck tones.

"My dear Sir Noel, the time is short, and I can do little or nothing. Shall I send for the Rey. Mr. Knight?"

The dying eyes turned upon him with a steady

"How long have I to live? I want the truth."
"Sir Noel, it is very hard, yet it must be Heaven's will. But a few hours, I fear."
"So soon?" said the dying man. "I did not think—— Send for Lady Thetford," he cried, wildly, half raising himself again—"send for Lady Thettord at once!"
"We have sent for her," said the doctor;

"We have sent for her," said the doctor;
"she will be here very soon. But the clergyman,
Sir Noel—the clergyman. Shall we not send for

him?"
"No!" said Sir Noel, sharply. "What do I
want of a clergyman? Leave me, both of you.
Stay, you can give me something, Gale, to keep
up my strength to the last? I shall need it.
Now go. I want to see no one but Lady Thetford."
"My lady has come!" cried Mrs. Hilliard,
stating to be feet; and at the same moment

any may mas compared Mrs. Hilliard, starting to her feet; and at the same moment the door was opened by Arneaud, and a lady in a sparkling ball-dress swept in. She stood for a moment on the threshold, looking from face to face with a bewildered air.

to tace with a bewindered air.

She was very young—searcely twenty, and
numistakably beautiful. Taller than common,
willowy and slight, with great, dark eyes, flowing dark curls, and a colorless olive skin. The ing dark curls, and a colorless clive skin. The darkly handsome face, with pride in every feature, was blanched now almost to the hue of the dying man's; but that glittering, bride-like figure, with its misty point-lace and blazing diamonds, seemed in strange contradiction to the idea of death.

"My lady! my lady!" cried Mrs Hilliard, with a suppressed seth moving near her.

a suppressed sob, moving near her.
The deep, dark eyes turned upon her for an instant, then wandered back to the bed; but

The deep, dark eyes turned upon her for an instant, then wandered back to the bed; but she never moved.

"Ada," said Sir Noel, faintly, "come here. The rest of you go. I want no one but my wife." The graceful figure in its shining robes and jewels, flitted over and dropped on its knees by his side. The other three quitted the room and closed the door. Husband and wife were alone with only death to overhear.

"Ada, my poor girl, only five months a wife—it's very hard on you; but it seems I must go. I have a great deal to say to you, Ada—that I and the without saying. I have been a villain, Ada—the greatest villain on earth to you. She had not spoken. She did not speak. She knelt beside him, white and still, looking and listening with strange calm. There was a sort of white horror in her face-but very little of the despairing great one would naturally look for in he dring man's wife.

"I don't sak you to forgive me, Ada—I have wronged you too deeply for that; but I loved

He lay panting and gasping for breath. There was a draught which Dr. Gale had left standing near, and he made a motion for it. She held it

near, and he made a motion for it. She held it to his lips, and he drank; her hand was un-steady and spilled it, but still she never spoke. "I cannot speak loudly, Ada," he said, in a husky whisper, "my strength seems to grow less every moment; but I want you to promise me before I begin my story that you will do what I ask. Promise! promise!" "He grasped her wrist and glared at her almost

"Promise!" he reiterated. "Promise! prom-

ise!"
"I promise," she said, with white lips.
"May Heaven deal with you, Ada Thetford, as you keep that promise. Listen now."
The wild night wore on. The cries of the wind in the trees grew louder and wider and more desolate. The rain beat and beat against the curtained glass; the candles grettered and flared; and the wood-fire flickered and died out, And still long after the midinity hour had.

and the wood-are inckered and alea out.
And still, long after the midnight hour had tolled, Adn, Lady Thetford, in her lace and silk and jewels, knelt beside her young husband, and listened to the dark and shameful story he lad to tell. She never once faltered, she never spoke or stirred; but her face was whiter than her dress, and her great dark eyes dilated with a horror too intense for words,

The voice of the dying man sank lower and lower—it fell to a dull, choking whisper at last, "You have heard all," he said huskily. "All?"

The word dropped from her lips like icefrozen look of blank horror never left her face,
"And you will keep your promise?"

"Yes."
"God bless you! I can die now! Oh, Ada!
I cannot ask you to forgive me; but I love you
so much—so much! Kiss me once, Ada, before

reaminot asky out to lorgive microtic tove you so much—so much! Kiss me once, Ada, before Igol."
His voice failed even with the words. Lady Thetford bent down and kissed him, but her lips were as cold and white as his own.

They were the last words Sir Noel Thetford ever spoke. The restless sea was sullenly ebbing, and the soul of the man was floating away with it. The gray, chill light of a new day was dawning over the Devonshire fields, rainy and raw, and with its first pale ray the soul of Noel Thetford, baronet, left the earth forever.

An hour later, Mrs. Hilliard and Dr. Gale ventured to enter. They had rapped again and again; but there had been no response, and alarmed they had come in. Stark and rigid already lay what was mortal of the Lord of Thetford Towers; and still on her knees, with that frozen look on her face, knet his living wife.

wife.
"My lady! my lady!" cried Mrs. Hilliard, her tears falling like rain, "Oh! my dear lady,

She looked up; then again at the marble form on the bed, and without a word or cry, slipped back in the old housekeeper's arms in a dead

CHAPTER II. CAPT. EVERARD.

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CAPT. EVERARD.

It was a very grand and stately ceremonial, that funeral procession from Thetford Towers. A week after that stormy December night they laid Sir Noel Thetford in the family vault, where generation after generation of his race sle, it their last long sleep. The gentry for miles and miles around were there, and among them came the heir-at-law, the Rev. Horace Thetford, only an obscure country curate now, but failing male heirs to Sir Noel, successor to the Thetford estate and fifteen thousand a year.

In a bedchamber, luxurious as wealth can make a room, lay Lady Thetford, dangerously ill. It was not a brain fever exactly, but something very like it into which she had fallen, coming out of that death-like swoon. It was all very sad and shocking—the sudden death of the gay and handsome young baronet, and the serious illness of his poor wife. The funeral oration of the Rev. Mr. Knight, rector of St., Gosport, from the text, "In the midst of life we are in death," was most eloquent and impressive, and women with tender hearts shed tears, and men listened with grave, sad faces. It was such a little while—only five short months—since the wedding-bells had rung, and there had been bonfires and feasting throughout the village; and Sir Noel, looking so proud and so happy, had driven up to the illuminated hall

you so dearly—so dearly! Oh, my God! what with his handsome bride. Only five months; a lost and cruel wretch I have been."

The funeral was over and everybody had gone ack home—everybody but the Rev. Horace The funeral was over and everybody had gone back home-everybody but the Rev. Horace Thetford, who lingered to see the result of my lady's liness, and if she died, to take possession of his estate. It was unutterably dismal in the dark, hushed old house, with Sir Noel's ghost seeming to haunt every room—very dismal and ghastly this waiting to step into dead people's shoes. But then there was fifteen thousand a year, and the finest place in Devonshire; and the Rev. Horace would have faced a whole regiment of ebots and lived in a vault for that.

ment of ghosts and lived in a vault for that.

But Lady Thetford did not die. Slowly but surely, the fever that had worn her to a shadow surery, the lever that had worn her to a shadow left her; and by-and-bye, when the early prim-roses peeped through the first blackened earth, she was able to come down-stairs—to come down feeble and frail and weak, colorless as death and as silent and cold.

The Rev. Horace went back to Yorkshire, yet not entirely in despair. Female heirs could not inherit Thetford—he stood a chance yet; and not entirely in despair. Female heirs could not inherit Thetford—he stood a chance yet; and he widow, not yet twenty, was left alone in the dreary old mansion. People were very sorry for her, and came to see L.T., and begged her to be resigned to her great loss; and Mr. Knight preached endless homilies on patience, and hope, and submission, and Lady Thetford listened to them just as if they had been talking Greek. She never spoke of her dead husband—she shivered at the mention of his name; but that night at his dying bed had changed her as never woman changed before. From a bright, ambitious, pleasure-loving girl, she had grown into a silent, haggard, hopeless woman. All the sunny spring days she sat by the window of her boudoir, gazing at the misty, boundless sea, pale and mutue—dead in life.

The friends who came to see her, and Mr. Knight, the rector, were a little puzzled by this abnormal case, but very sorry for the pale young widow, and disposed to think better of her than ever before. It must surely have been the vilest slander that she had not cared for her husband, that she had married him only for

the vilest slander that she had not cared for her husband, that she had married him only for his wealth and title; and that young soldier— that captain of dragoons—must have been a myth. She might have been engaged to him, of course, before Sir Noel came, that seemed to be an undisputed fact; and she might have jitted him for a wealthier lover, that was all a common case. But she must have loved her

be an undisputed fact; and sne mgm may disted him for a wealthier lover, that was all a common case. But she must have loved her husband very dearly, or she never would have been broken-hearted like this at his loss.

Spring deepened into summer. The June roses in the flower-gardens of Thetford were in rosy bloom, and my lady was ill again—very, very ill. There was an eminent physician down from London, and there was a frail little mite of babyhood lying among lace and flannel; and the eminent physician shook his head, and looked portentously grave as he glanced from the crib to the bed. Whiter than the pillows, whiter than snow, Ada, Lady Thetford, lay, hovering in the Valley of the Shadow of Death; that other feeble little life seemed flickering, too—it was so even a toss up between the great rival powers, Life and Death, that a straw might have turned the scale either way. So slight being that baby-hold of gasping breath, that Mr. Knight, in the absence of any higher authority, and in the unconsciousness of the mother, took it upon himself to baptize it. So a china bowl was brought, and Mrs. Hilliard held the bundle of flannel and long white robes, and the child was named—the name which the mether had said weeks ago it was to be called, and the child was named—the name which the mother had said weeks ago it was to be called, if a boy—Rupert Noel Vandeleur_Thetford; for it was a male heir, and the Rev. Horace'

it was a male heir, and the Rev. Horace's cake was dough.

Days went by, weeks, months, and to the surprise of the eminent physician neither mother nor child Gr.d. Summer waned, winter returned; and the anniversary of Str Noel's death came round, and my lady was able to walk down-stairs, shivering in the warm air under all her wraps. She had expressed no pleasure or thankfulness in her own safety, or that of her child. She had asked eagerly if it were a boy or a girl; and hearing its sex, had turned her face to the wall, and lay for hours and hours speechless and motionless. Yet it was very dear to her, too, by fits and starts, asit were. She would hold it in her arms half a day, sometimes covering it with kisses, with jealous, passionate love, crying over it, and half smothering it with carcases; and then, again, in a fit of sullen apathy, would resign it to its nurse, and not ask to see it for hours. It was very strange and in-explicable, her conduct, altogether; more es-

pecially, return of that over a chroni never we gave no i theirs. tired of Thetford Mr. Knig never led than the recluse a handsom beauty, t hair, ma the more Month

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other er re-death walk under asure of her ooy or r face eech-ar to would covwith sullen ot ask ad inpecially, as with her return to health came no return of cheerfulness or hope. The dark gloom that overshadowed her life seemed to settle into a chronic disease, rooted and incurable. She never went out; she returned no visite; she gave no invitations to those who came to repeat theirs. Gradually people fell off; they grew tired of that sullen coidness in which Lady Thetford wrapped herself as in a mantle, until Mr. Knight and Dr. Gale grew to be almost her only visitors. "Mariana, in the Moated Grange," never led a more solitary and dreary existence than the handsome young widow, who dwelt a recluse at Thetford Towers; for she was very handsome still, of a pale monlight sort of beauty, the great, dark eyes, and abundant dark hair, making her fixed and changeless pallor all the more remarkable.

hair, making her fixed and changeless pallor all the more remarkable.

Months and seasons went by. Summers followed winters, and Lady Thetford still buried herself alive in the gray old manor—and the little beir was six years old. A delicate child still, puny and sickly, and petted and spoiled, and indudged in every childish whim and caprice. His mother's image and idol—no look of the fair-haired, sanguine, blue-eyed Thetford sturdiness in his little, pinched, pale face, large, dark eyes, and crisp, black ringlets. The years had gone by like a slow dream; life was stagnant enough in St. Gosport, doubly stagnant at Thetford Towers, whose mistress rarely went abroad beyond her own gates, save when she took her little son out for an airing in the pony phae-ton.

She had taken him out for one of those airings

She had taken him out for one of those airings on a July afternoon, when he had nearly accomplished his seventh year. They had driven seaward some miles from the manor-house, and Lady Thetford and her little boy had got out, and were strolling leisurely up and down the hot, white sands, while the groom waited with the pony-phaeton just within sight.

The long July afternoon wore on. The sun that had blazed all day like a wheel of fire, fropped lower and lower into the crimson west. The wide sea shone red with the reflections of the lurid glory in the heavens, and the numberless waves glittered and flashed as if sown with stars. A faint, far-off breeze swept over the sea, sait and cold; and the fishermen's boats danced along with the red sunset glinting on their sails.

see, salt and cold; and the fishermen's boats danced along with the red sunset glinting on their sails.

Up and down, slowly and thoughtfully, the lady walked, her eyes fixed on the wide sea. As the rising breeze met her, she drew the scarlet shawl she wore over her black silk dress closer sround her, and glanced at her boy. The little fellow was running over the sands, tossing pebbles into the surf, and hunting for shells; and her eves left him and wandered once more to the lurid splendor of that sunset on the sea. It was very quiet here, with no living thing in sight but themselves; so the lady's start of astonish nent was natural when, turning an abrupt angle in the path leading to the shore, she saw a man coming toward her over the sands. A tall, powerful-looking man of thirty, bronzed and handsome, and with an unmistakably military air, although in plain black clothes. The lady took a second look, then stood stock still, and gazed like one in a dream. The man approached, litted his hat, and stood silent and grave before her.

"Captain Everard!"

"Yes, Lady Thetford—after eight years—Captain Everard again."

The deep, strong voice suited the bronzed, grave face, and both had a peculiar power of their own. Lady Thetford, very, very pale, held out one fair jeweled hand.
"Captain Everard, I am very glad to see you again."

He belt over the little hand a moment, then

again."

He bent over the little hand a moment, then dropped it, and stood looking at her silent.
"I thought you were in India," she said, trying to be at ease. "When did you return?"
"A month ago. My wife is dead. I, too, am widowed, Lady Thetford."
"I am very sorry to hear it," she said, gravely.
"Did she die in India?"
"Yes; and I have come home with my little daughter."
"Your daughter! Then she left a child?"

Instant at his words. She looked at him, then away over the darkening sea.

"And you, my lady—you gained the desire of your heart, wealth, and a title? Let me hope they have made you a happy woman."

"I am not happy?"

"No? But you have been—you were while Sir Noel lived?"

"My husband was very good to me, Captain Everard. His death was the greatest misfortune that could have befallen me."

"But you are beaultful. You may wear a corenct next time."

His face and glance were so darkly grave, that the covert sneer was almost hidden. But she

the covert sneer was almost hidden. But she

felt it.
"I shall never marry again, Captain Everard."

"I shall never marry again, Captain Everard."
"Never? You surprise me! Six years—may, seven, a widow, and with innumerable attractions. Oh, you cannot mean it!"
She made a sudden, passionate gesture—locked at him, then away.
"It is uscless—worse than uscless, folly, madness, to lift the veil from the irreveable past, But don't you think, don't you, Lady Thertord, that you might have been equally happy if you had married me?"

She stood graying sees.

that you might have been equally happy it you had married me?"

She made no reply. She stood gazing seaward, cold and still.

"I was madly, insanely, absurdly in love with pretty Ada Vandeleur in those days, and I think I would have made her a good husband; better, however-forgive me—than I ever made my poor dead wife. But you were wise and ambitious, my pretty Ada, and bartered your black eyes and raven ringlets to a higher bidder. You jitted me in cold blood, poor love-sick devil that I was, and reigned resplendent as my Lady Thetford. Ah! you knew how to choose the better part, my pretty Ada!"

"Capitaln Everard, I am sorry for the past—I have atoned, if suffering can atone. Have a little pity, and let me alone!"

He stood and looked at her silently, gravely. Then said, in a voice deep and calm:

"We are both free! Will you marry me now, Ada!"

Adai"
"I cannot!"
"But I love you—I have always loved you.
And you—I used to think you loved me!"
He was strangely calm and passionless, voice and glance, and face. But Lady Thetford had covered ker face, and was sobbing.
"I did—I do—I always have! But I cannot marry you. I will love you all my life; but don't, don't ask me to be your wife!"
"As you please!" he said, in the same passionless voice. "I think it is best myself; for the George Everard of to-day is not the George Everard who loved you eight years ago. We would not be happy—I know that. Ada, is that your son?"

would not be happy—I know that. Ada, is that your son !?"
"Yes."
"I should like to look at him. Here, my little baronet! I want to see you."
The boy, who had been looking curiously at the stranger, ran up at a sign from his mother. The tall captain lifted him in his arms and gazed in his small, thin face, with which his bright tartan plaid contrasted harshly.
"He hasn't a look of the Thetfords. He is your own sen, Ada. My little baronet, what is your name?"

your name?"
"Sir Rupert Thetford," answered the child, struggling to get free. "Let me go—I don't know you!"
The captain set him down with a grim smile; and the boy clung to his mother's skirts, and eyed the tall stranger askance.

"I want to go home, mamma! I'm tired and hunger."

"I want to go home, mammal I'm tired and hungry."
"Presently, dearest. Run to William, he has cakes for you. Captain Everard, I shall be happy to have you at dinner."
"Thanks; but I must deeline. I go back to London to-night. I sail for India again in a week."

widowed, Lady Thetiord."

"I am very sorry to hear it," she said, gravely.

"Did she die in India"

"Yes; and I have come home with my little daughter."

"Your daughter! Then she left a child?"

"One. It is on her account I have come. The climate killed her mother. I had merey on her daughter, and have brought her home."

"I am sorry for your wife. Why did she remain in India."

"Because she preferred death to leaving me. She loved me, Lady Thetford!"

"Because she preferred death to leaving me. His powerful eyes were on her face—that pale, beautiful face, into which the blood came for an incomplete the control of the control of

She took no notice of the taunt; she looked

She took no notice of the taunt; she looked only too happy to render him this service.

"I am so pleased! She will be such a nice companion for Rupert. How old is she?"

"Nearly four."

"Is she here?"

"No; she is in London. I will fetch her down in a day or two."

"What do you call her?"

"Mabel—after her mother. Then it is settled, Lady Thetford, I am to fetch her?"

"I shall be delighted! But won't you dine with me?"

with me ?"

with me?"
"No. I must catch the evening train. Farewell, Lady Thetford, and many thanks! In three days I will be here again."
He lifted his hat and walked away. Lady Thetford watched him out of sight, and then turned slowly, as she heard her little boy calling her with shrill impatience. The red sunset had faded out; the sea lay gray and cold under the twilight sky, and the evening breeze was chill, Changes in sky and sea and land told of coming night, and Lady Thetford, shivering slightly in the rising wind, hurried away to be driven home.

CHAPTER III.

" LITTLE MAT."

On the evening of the third day after this interview, a fly from the railway drove up the long, winding avenue leading to the great front entrance of the Thetford mansion. A bronzed military gentlerian, a nurse and a little girl, occupied the hy, and the gentleman's keen, dark eyes wandered searchingly around. Swelling meadows, velvety lawns, sloping terraces, waving trees, bright flower-gardens, quaint old fish-ponds, sparkling fountains, and a wooded park, with sprightly deer—that was what he saw, all bathed in the golden halo of the summer sunset. Massive and grand, the old house rearred its gray head, half overgrown with tyy and elimbing roses. Gaudy peacocks strutted on the terraces; a graceful gazelle filtted out for an instant amongst the trees to look at them and then fled in afright; and the barking of laif a dozen mastiffs greeted their approach noisily.

hair a dozen mastiffs greeted their approach noisily, "A fine old place," thought Captain Ev-erard. "My pretty Ada might have done worse. A grand old place for that puny child to inherit. The staunch old warrior-blood of the Thetfords is sadly adulterated in his pale veins, I fancy. Well, my little May, and how are you going to like all this?"

ween, my nune many, and how are you going to like all this, a bright-faced little creature, with great sparking eyes and rose-bloom cheeks, was looking in delight at a distant terrace.

"See, papa! See all the pretty peacocks! Look, Ellen," to the nurse, "three, four, five! Oh, how pretty!"

"Then little May will like to live here, where she can see the pretty peacocks every day?"

"And all the pretty flowers, and the water, and the little boy—where's the little boy, papa?"

"In the house—you'll see him presently; but you must be very good, little May, and not pull his nair, and scratch his face, and poke your fincers in his eyes, like you used to do with Willio Brandon. Little May must learn to be good the way the contract of the contract

Willie Brandon. Little May must learn to be good."

Little May put one rosy finger in her mouth, and set her head on one side like a defiant canary. She was one of the prettiest little fairies imaginable, with her pale, flaxen curls, and sparkling light-gray eyes, and apple-blossom complexion; but she was evidently as much spoiled as little Sir Rupert Thetford himself.

Lady Thetford sat in the long drawing-room, after her solitary dinner, and little Sir Rupert played with his rocking-horse and a pile of picture-books in a remote corner. The young widow lay back in the vioet-review depths of a carved and glided fauteuil, very simply dressed in black and crimson, but looking very fair and stately withal. She was watching her boy with a half smile on her face, when a footnma entered with Captain Everard's card. 7 ady Thetford looked up eagerly.

with Captain Everard's card. Jady Thetford looked up eagerly.

"Show Captain Everard up at once."
The footman bowed and disappeared. Five minutes later, and the tall captain and his little daughter stood before her.

"At last!" said Lady Thetford, rising and holding out her hand to her old lover, with a smile that reminded him of other days—"at last, when I was growing tired waiting. And this is your little girl—my little girl from hencoforth? Come here, my pet, and kiss your new mamma."

She bent over the little one, kissing the pink

she bent over the little one, assing the plus checks and roy lips.

"She is fair and tiny—a very fairy; but she resembles you, nevertheless, Capt. Everard."

"In temper—yes," said the captain. "You will find her spoiled, and willful, and cross, and capricious and no end of trouble. Won't she, Mex."

Capricuse and May?"

"She will be the better match for Rupert on that account," Lady Thetford said, smiling, and unfastening little Miss Everard's wraps with her own fair fingers. "Come here, Ripert, and welcome your new sister."

"The wamp baronet approached, and dutifully

welcome your new sister."
The young baronet approached, and dutifully glissed little May, who put up her rose-bud mouth right willingly. Sir Rupert Thetford wasn't tall, rather undersized, and delicate for his seven years; but he was head and shoulders over the flaxen-haired fairy, with the bright

"I want a ride on your rocking-horse," cried little May, fraternizing with him at once; "and oh! what nice picture books and what a

The children ran of together to their distant corner, and Captain Everard sat down for the

"You have not dined?" said Lady Thetford. Allow me to—" her hand was on the bell,

first time.

"You have not dined?" said Lady Thetford.

"Allow me to—" her hand was on the bell, but he captain interposed.

"Many thanks—nothing. We dined at the village; and I leave again by the seven-fitty train. It is past seven now, so I have but little time to spare, I fear I am put'ing you to a great deal of trouble; but May's nurse insists on being taken back to London to-night."

"It will be of no consequence," replied Lady Thetford, "Rupert's nurse will take charge of bee. I intend to advertise for a nursery governess in a few days. Rupert's health has always beet so extremely delicate, that he has not even began a presert of learning yet, and k is quite time. He grows stronger, I fancy; but Dr. Gale tells me frankly his constitution is dangerously weak."

She sighed as she spoke, and looked over to where he stood beside little May, who had mounted the rocking-horse boy-fashion. Sir Rupert was expostulating.
"You onthirt't to sit that wav—wask mamma."

Rupert was expostulating,
"You oughtn't to sit that way—ask mamma.
You ought to sit side-saddle. Only boys sit like

that."
"I don't care!" retorted Miss Everard, rock"I don't care!" retorted Miss Everard, rock"I'll sit whating more violently than ever. "I'll sit what-ever way I like! Let me alone!" Lady Thetford looked at the captain with a

Lawy instance, which is a daughter, surely! bent on awing her own way. What a fairy it isl and yet such a perfect picture of health."

"Mabe! was never ill an hour in her life, I believe," said her father; "she is not at all too good for this world. I only hope she may not grow up the torment of your life—she is thorsuchly spoiled."

good for this world. I only hope she may not grow up the torment of your life—she is thoroughly spoiled."

"And I fear if she were not, I should do it. Ahl I expect she will be a great comfort to me, and a world of good to Rupert. He has never had a playmate of his own years, and children need children as much as they need sunshine." They sat for ten minutes conversing gravely, chiefly on business matters connected with little May's annuity—not at all as they had conversed three days before by the sea-side. Then, as half-past seven drew near, the captain arose, "I must go; I will hardly be in time as it is, Come here, little May, and bid papa good-bye," "Let papa come to May," responded his daughter, still rocking. "I can't get off." Captain Everard laughed, went over, bent down and kissed her.

"Good-bye, May; don't forget papa, and learn to be a good girl. Good-bye, baronet; try and grow strong and tall. Farewell, Lady Thetford, with my best thanks."

She held his hand, looking up in his suncurned face with tears in her dark eyes.

"We may never meet again, Captain Everard," she said hurriedly, "Tell me before we part that you forgive me the past."

"Truly, Ada, and for the first time. The service you have rendered me fully atones. You should have been my child's mother—be a mother to her now. Good-bye, and God bless you and your boy!"

He stooped over, touched her cheek with his ber everentially, and then was gone. Gone forever—never to meet those he left behind this side of eternity.

Little May hore the loss of papa and nurse with philosophical indifference—her new playmans sufficed for both. The children took to

one another with the readiness of childhood— Rupert all the mcre readily that he had never before had a playmate of his own years. He was naturally a quiet child, caring more for his picture-books and his nurse's stories than for tops, or balls, or marbles. But little May Ever-ard seemed from the first to inspire him with some of her own superspundant, vitality and and seemed from the fact to inspire limit with some seemed from the fact to inspire limit with some life. The chief was never, for a single instant, quiet; she was the most resetless, the most impetnous, the most visponus little creature that can be conceived. Feet and tongue and hands never were still from morning till night; and the life of Sir Rupert's nurse, hitherto one of idle case, became all at once a misery to her. The little girl was everywhere—everywhere, especially where she had no business to be; and nurse never knew an easy moment for trotting after her, and resculing her from all sorts of perils. She could climb like a cat, or a goat, and risked her neck about twenty times per diem; she salied her shoes in the sonp when let in as a treat to dinner, and washed her hands in her milit-and-water. She became the intimate friend of the pretty peacocks and the big. diem; she salied her shoes in the sonp when let in as a treat to dinner, and washed her hands in her milk-and-water. She became the intimate friend of the pretty peacocks and the big, good-tempered dogs, with whom, in utter fearesness, she rolled about in the grass half the day. She broke young Rupert's toys, and, tore his picture-books and slapped his face, and pulled his hair, and made herself master of the situation before she had been twenty-four hours in the house. She was thoroughly and completely spoiled. What India nurses had left undone, injudicious pritting and flattery on the homeward passage had completed—and her temper was something appalling. Her shrieks of passion at the slightest contradiction of her imperial will rang through the house, and rent the tortured tympanums of all who heard. The little Kantippe would filing herself flat on the carpet, and literally scream herself black in the face, until, in dread of apoplexy and sudden death, her frightened hearers hastened to yield. Of course, one such victory insured all the rest. As for Sir Rupert, before she had been a week at Thetford Towers, he dared not call his soul his own. She had partially scalped him on several occasions, and left the mark of her cathicon alls in his tender visage but her venomous power of screeching for sours at will had more to do with the little barone's dread of his than anything else. He field ingloriously riumphantly to Miss Everard. With all his, when not thwated—when allowed to smash toys, and dirty her clothes, and torment inoffensive lapdogs; when allowed, it in short, to follow "her own sweet will." It May was as as charming a fairy as ever the sun shone on. Her gleeful laugh made music in the dreary old rooms, such as had never been heard there for many a day, and her mischlevous anties were the delight of all who did not suffer there by. The servants petted and indulged her, and fed her on unwholesome cakes and sweet hered of her life.

Lady Thetford saw all this with inward apprehension. If her ward was com

Lady Thetford saw all this with inward apprehension. If her ward was completely beyond her power of control at four, what would she be a dozen years hence?
"Her father was right," thought the lady. "I am afraid she will give me a great deal of trouble. I never saw so headstrong, so utterly unmanageable a child."
But Lady Thetford was your found of the false.

trouble. I never saw so headstrong, so utterly unmanageable a child."
But Lady Thetford was very fond of the fairy despot withal. When her son came running to her for succor, drowned in tears, his mother took him in her arms and kissed him and soothed him—but she never punished the offender. As for Sir Rupert, he might fly ignominiously, but he never fought back. Little May had all the hair-pulling and face-scratching to herself.
"I must get a governess," mused Lady Thetford. "I may find one who can control this little vixon; and it is really time Rupert began his studies. I shall speak to Mr. Knight about it." Le iy Thetford sent that very day to the rectory her ladyship's compliments, the servant said, und would Mr. Knight call at his sarliest conv. Hence. Mr. Knight sent in answer to expect him that same evening; and on his way he fell in with Dr. Gale, going to the manorhouse on a professional visit.
"Little Sir Rupert keeps weakly," he said; "no constitution to speak of. Not at all like the Thetfords—ty nout.—Turn out.—Sir Rupert is a Vandeleur, inherits his mother's constitution—delicate child, very."

"Have you seen Lady Thetford's ward!" inquired the clergyman, smiling; no hereditary
weakness there, I fancy. I'll answer for the
strength of her lungs, at any rate. The other
day she wanted Lady Thetford's watch for a
plaything; she couldn't have it, and down she
fell flat on the floor in what her nurse calls
'one of her tantrums.' You should have heard
her, her shrieks were appalling."
'I have," said the doctor, with emphasis;
"she has the temper of the old demon. If I
had anything to do with that child, I should
whip her within an inch of her life—that's all
she wants, lots of whipping! The Lord only
knows the future, but I pity her prospective
husband!"

husband!

"The taming of the shrew," laughed Mr. Knight. "Katherine and Petruchio over again! For my part, I think Lady Thetford was unwise to undertake such a charge. With her delicate health it is altogether too much for her."

The two gentlemen were shown into the library, whilst the servant went to inform his lady of their arrival. The library had a French lorary whilst the servain went to morn his lady of their arrival. The library had a French window opening on a sloping lawn, and a French window opening on a sloping lawn, and here, chasing butterfiles in high glee, were the two children—the pale, dark-eyed baronet, and the fixen-tressed little East Indian.

"Look," said Dr. Gale. "Is Sir Rupert going to be your Petruchio! Who knows that we do not behold a future Lady Thetford?"

"She is very pretty," said the rector thought-fully, "and she may change with years. Your prophecy may be fulfilled."
The present Lady Thetford entered as be spoke. She had heard the remarks of both, and there was an unusual pallor and gravity in her face as she advanced to receive them.

Little Sir Rupert was called in, and May followed, with a butterfly crushed to death in each fat little hand.

lowed, with a battering of the little hand.

"She kills them as fast as she catches them," said Sir Rupert, ruefully. "It's cruel, isn't it,

I had a halfer, itelanly, and the cheek, lish a, mamma ?"
Little May, quite unabashed, displayed her dead prizes, and cut short the doctor's conference by impatiently pulling her play-fellow away, "Come, Rupert, come," she cried. "I want to catch the black one with the yellow wings. Stick youngongue out and come."

Sir Rupert displayed his tongue, and submitted his pulse to the doctor, and let himself be pulled away by May.

"The gray mare in that span is decidedly the better horse," laughed the doctor. "What a little despot in planfores it is."

When her visitors had left, Lady Thetford walked to the window and stood watching the two children racing in the sunshine. It was @

two children racing in the sunshine. It was a pretty sight, but the lady's face was contracted

with pain.
"No, no," she thought. "I hope not—I pray not. Strangel but I never thought of the possibility before. She will be poor, and Rupert must marry a rich wife, so that it—"
She paused, with a sort of shudder, then added; "What will be think, my darling boy, of his father and mother if that day ever comes?" with pain.

CHAPTER IV. MRS. WEYMORE.

LADY THEFFORD had settled her business satisfactorily with the rector of St. Gosport, "Nothing could be more opportune," he said, "I am going to London next week on business, which will defant me upward of a fortnight. I will immediately advertise for such a person as you want."

will immediately advertise for such a person as you want."

You have understand, "said her ladyship, "You have the require a young girl. I wish a middle-aged person—a widow, for instance, who has had children of her own. Both Rupert and May are spoiled—May particularly is perfectly unmanageable. A young girl as governess for aer would never do."

Mr. Knight departed with these instructions and the following week started for the great metropolis. An advertisement was at once inserted in the Times newspaper, stating all Lady Thetford's requirements, and destring immediate application. Another week later, and Lady Thetford received the following communication: nication:

meation:

"Dam Lady Thurrond—I have been fairly besleged with applicants for the past week—all widows, and all professing to be thoroughly competent. Clergymen's widows, doctors' widows,
officers' widows—all sorts of widows. I never before thought so many could apply for one situation,
I have chosen one in sheer desperation—the widow of a country gentleman in distressed circum

stances, where the manner, with governess from her labells me, as gether, I were any next Lady The digh of retember any temper an with now. ame day, zoverness The sec

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netions, once in-all Lady imme-er, and

airly be-all wid. ly com-widows, ever be-tustion, he wid-

stances, who, I think, will suit. She is eminently respectable in appearance, quiet and lady-like in manner, with flow pears' experience in the nursery-governess line, and the highest recommendation from her late employers. She has lost a child, she tells me, and from her looks and manner altogether, I should judge she was a person convergence of the pears of the pea

islls me."

"Yes, my lady."
There was a little tremor in Mrs. Weymore's low voice, and her blue eyes shifted and fell under Lady Thetford's steady and somewhat hauchty gaze.

"Yet you look young—much younger than I unatined, or wished."

"I am twenty-seven years old, my lady."
That was my lady's own age precisely, but she looked half a dozen years the elder of the

That was my lady's own age precisely, but the looked half a dozen years the elder of the two.

"Are you a native of London?"

"No, my lady—of Berkshire."

"And you have been a widow, how long?"

What ailed Mrs. Weymore? She was all white and trembling—even her hands, folded and pressed together in her lap, shook in spite of her.

"Eight years and more."

She said it with a sort of sob, hysterically choked. Lady Thetford looked on surprised, and a trifie displeased. She was a very proud woman, and certainly wished for no seene with ber hired dependents.

"Eight years is a tolerable time," she said, couly. "You have lost children?"

"One, my lady."

Again that shoked, hysterical sob. My lady went on pitlessly.

"Is it long ago?"

"All both together? That was rather hard. Well, I hope you understand the management of children—spoiled ones particularly. Here we have been been and well, I hope you are to take charge of. Rupert—They, could here.

"Any, could here."

"Any out are to take charge of. Rupert beid aloof.

"This is my ward—this is my son. I presume Mr. Knight has told you. If you can subdue the temper of that child, you will provourself, indeed, a treasure. The east parlor has been fitted up for your use; the children will take their meals there with you; the room adjoining is to be the school-room. I have appointed one of the maids to wait on you. I' was a popointed one of the maids to wait on you. I' was considered the interview.

"And the terms proposed by Mr. Knight suit you?"

"And the terms proposed by Mr. Knight suit you?"

"And the terms proposed by the Knight suit you?"

your journey. I will not detain you longer. To-morrow your duties will commence."
She rang the bell—directed the servant who came to show the governess to the east parlor and see to her wants, and then to send nurse for the children. Fiften minutes after she drove away in the pony-phaeton, whilst the new governess stood by the window of the east parlor and watched her vanish in the amber haze of the August sunset.

lor and watched her vanish in the amber haze of the August sunset.

Lady Thetford's business in St. Gosport detained her a couple of hours. The big, white, August moon was rising as she drove slowly homeward, and the nightingale sang its vesper lay in the scented hedge-rows. As she passed the rectory she saw Mr. Knight leaning over his own gate enjoying the placid beauty of the summer evening, and Lady Thetford reined in her ponies to speak to him.

"So happy to see your ladyshin! Won't you.

"So happy to see your ladyship! Won't you alight and come in? Mrs. Knight will be delighted."

ponies to speak to him.

"So happy to see your ladyship! Won't you alight and come in? Mrs. Knight will be delighted."

"Not this 'ening, I think. Had you much trouble about my business?"

"I had applicants enough, certainly," laughed the rector. "I had reason to remember Mr. Weller's immortal advice, 'Beware of widders.' How do you like your governess?"

"I have hardly had time to form an opinion. She is younger than I could desire."

"She looks much younger than the age she gives, I know; but that is a common case. I trust my choice will prove satisfactory—her references are excellent. Your ladyship has had an interview with her?"

"A very brief one. Her manner struck me unpleasantly—so odd, and shy, and nervous. I hardly know how to characterize it; but she may be a paragon of governesses, for all that. Good evening, best regards to Mrs. Knight. Cal soor mand seed the young the structure of the content of

"I am afraid you don't make yourself at home I am afraid you don't make yourself at home here, 'said the good-natured housekeeper; 'you stay too much alone, and it isn't good foryoung people like you.'
'I am used to solitude,' replied the governess with a smile, that ended in a sigh, 'and I have grown to like it. Will you take a seat?'
'No,' sold Mrs. Hilliard. 'I heard you say the other day you would like to go over the house; so, as I have a couple of hours' leisure, I will show it to you now.'
The governess rose eagerly.
'I have been wanting to see it so much,' she said, 'but I feared to give trouble by asking. It is very good of you to think of me, dear Mrs. Hilliard.'
'She isn't much used to people thinking of

pointed one of the maids to wait on you. I struct you will find your chamber comfortable."

"Exceedingly so, my lady." "She isn't much used to people thinking of her," reflected the housekeeper, "or she wouldn't be so grateful for trifles. Let me see, and allow a constant of the consta

Through the long corridors, up wide, black, alippery stair-cases, into vast, unused rooms, where ghostly echoes and darkness had it all to themselves, Mrs. Hilliard led the governess. "These apartments have been unused since before the late Sir Noel's time," said Mrs. Hilliard; "his father kept them full in the hutting season, and at Christmas time. Since Sir Noel's death, my lady has shut herself up and received no company, and gone nowhere. She is begitning to go out more of late than she has done ever since his death."

Mrs. Hilliard was not looking at the governorm.

ever since his death."
Mrs. Hilliard was not looking at the governess, or she might have been surprised at the nervous restlessness and agitation of her manner, as she listened to these very commonplace

ner, as she listened to these very commonplace remarks.

"Lady Thetford was very much attached to her husband, then?" Mrs. Weymore said, her voice tremulous.

"Ah! that she was! She must have been, for his death nearly killed her. It was sudden enough, and shocking enough, goodness knows! I shall never forget that dreadful night. This is the old banqueting-hall, Mrs. Weymore, the largest and dreariest room in the house."

Mrs. Weymore, trembling very much, either with cold or that unaccountable nervousness of hers, hardly looked round at the vast wilderness.

hers, hardly looked round at the vast wilderness

with cold or that unaccountable nervousness of a room.

"You were with the late Sir Noel, then, when he died?"

"Yes, until my lady came. Ah! it was a dreadful thing! He had taken her to a ball, and riding home I is horse threw him. We sent for the doctor and my lady at once; and when she came, all white and scared like, he sent us out of the room. He was as calm and sensible as you or me, but he seemed to have something on his mind. My lady was shut up with him for about three hours, and then we went in—Dr. Gale and me. I shall never forget that sad sight. Foor Sir Noel was dead, and she was kneeling beside him in her ball dress, like somebody furned to stone. I spoke to her, and shrund lady under the some her will be to speak.

"It is desolate. Come, I'll show you the bit liard-room, and then we'll go up-stairs to the room Sir Noel died in. Everything remains just as it was—no one has ever slept here since. If you only knew, Mrs. Weymore, what a sad time is at was—no one has ever slept here since. If you only knew, Mrs. Weymore, what a sad time it was: but you do know, poor dear! you have lost a husband yourself!"

The governess fung up her hands before her face with a suppressed cry so full of anguish that the housekeeper stared at her aghast. Almost as quickly she recovered herself again.
"Don't mind me," she said, in a choking voice, "I can't help it. You don't know what I suffered—what I still suffer. Oh, pray, don't mind me!"

"Certainly not, my dear," said Mrs. Hilliard, thinking inwardly the governess was a very odd person, indeed.

mind me!"
"Certainly not, my dear," said Mrs. Hilliard, thinking inwardly the governess was a very odd person, indeed.
They looked at the billiard-room, where the tables stood, dusty and disused, and the balls lay idly by.

They fooked at the billiard-room, where the tables stood, dusty and disused, and the balls lay idly by.

"I don't know when it will be used again," said Mrs. Hilliard, "perhaps not until Sir Rupert grows up. There was a time," lowering her voice, "that I thought he would never live to be as old and strong as he is now. He was the puniest baby, Mrs. Weymore, you ever looked at—nobody thought he would live. And that would have been a pitty, you know; for then the Thetford estate would have gone to a distant branch of the family, as it would, too, if Sir Ruyert had been a little girl."

She went on up-stairs to the industred part of the building, followed by Mrs. Weymore, who seemed to grow more and more agitated with every word the housekeeper said with every word the housekeeper said with an awe-struck whisper, as if the dead man still, lay there; "no one ever enters here but me, be uplocked it as she anoke and went in

still lay there; "no one ever enters here but me."
She unlocked it as she spoke, and went in, Mrs. Weymore followed, with a face of frightened pallor that struck even the housekeeper.
"Good gracious me! Mrs. Weymore, what is the matter? You are as pale as a ghost. Are you afraid to enter a room where a person has died?"

Mrs. Weymore's reply was almost inaudible; she stood on the threshold, pallid, trembling, un-accountably moved. The housekeeper gianced at her suspiciously. "Very odd," she thought, "very! The new

governess is either the most nervous person I ever met, or else—no, she can't have known Sir Noel in his lifetime. Of course not." They left the chamber after a cursory glance around—Mrs. Weymore never advancing beyond the threshold. She had not spoken, and that white pallor made her face ghastly still. "I'll show you the picture-gallery," said Mrs. Hilliard; "and then, I believe, you will have seen all that is worth seeing at Thetford Towers." She led the way to a long, half-lighted room,

Towers."

She led the way to a long, half-lighted room, wainscoted and antique, like all the rest, where long rows of dead and gone Thetfords looked down from the carved walls. There were knights in armor, countesses in ruiffes and powder and lace, bishops in mitre c. head and crozier in hand, and judges in gown and wig. There were ladies in pointed stomachers and jeweled fans, with the waists of their dresses under their arms, but all 'air and handsome, and unmistakably allke. Last of all the long array, there was Sir Noel, a fair-haired, handsome vout no fwenty. Noel, a fair-haired, handsome youth of twenty, with a smile on his face and a happy radiance in his blue eyes. And by his side, dark and haughty and beautiful, was my lady in her bridal-robes.

bridal-robes.

"There is not a handsomer face amongst them all than my lady's," said Mrs. Hilliard, with pride. "You ought to have seen her when Sir Noel first brought her home; she was the most beautiful creature I ever looked at. Ah! it was such a pity he was killed. I suppose they'll be having Sir Rupert's taken next and hung beside her. He don't look much like the Thetfords; ae's his mother over again—a Vandeleur, dark and still."

If Mrs. Weymore made any reply the house-keeper did not catch it; she was standing with

keeper did not catch it; she was standing with her face averted, hardly looking at the portraits,

her face averted, hardly looking at the portraits, and was the first to leave the picture-gallery. There were a few more rooms to be seen—a drawing-room suite, now closed and disused; an ancient library, with a wonderful stained window, and a vast echoing reception-room. But is was all over at last, and Mrs. Hilliard, with her keys, trotted cheerfully of; and Mrs. Weymore was left to solitude and her own thoughts once more.

A strange person, certainly. She locked the door and fell down on her knees by the bedside,

door and tell down on her knees by the beastle, sobbing until her whole form was convulsed. "Oh! why did I come here? Why did I come here?" came passionately with the wild storm of sobs. "I might have known how it would be! Nearly nine years—nine long, long years, and not to have forgotten yet!"

CHAPTER V. A JOURNEY TO LONDON.

A JOURNEY TO LONDON.

VERY slowly, very monotonously went life at Thetford Towers. The only noticeable change was that my lady went rather more into society, and a greater number of visitors came to the manor. There had been a children's party on the occasion of Sir Rupert's eighth birthday, and Mrs. Weymore had played for the little people to dance; and my lady had cast off her chronic gloom, and been handsome and happy as of old. There had been a dinner-party later—an emprecedented event now at Thetford Towers; and the weeds, worn so long, had been discarded, and in diamonds and biack velvet Lady Ada Thetford had been beautiful, and stately, and gracious, as a young queen. No one knew the reason of the sudden change, but they accepted the fact just as they had found it, and set it down, perhaps, to woman's caprice.

the fact just as they had found it, and set it down, perhaps, to woman's caprice.

So slowly the summer passed: autumn came and went, and it was December, and the ninth anniversary of Sir Noel's death.

A gloomy day—wet, and wild, and windy. The wind, sweeping over the angry sea, surged and roared through the skeleton trees; the rain lashed the windows in rattling gusts; and the leaden sky hung low and frowning over the drenched and dreary earth. A dismal day— very like that other, nine years ago, that had been Sir Noel's last. In Lady Thetford's boudoir a bright-red coal

In Lady Thetford's boudoir a bright-red coal fire blazed. Pale-blue curtains of satin damask shut out the wintry prospect, and the softest and richest of foreign carpets hushed every footfall. Before the fire, on a little table, my lady's breakfast temptingly stood; the silver, old and quaint; the rare antique porcelain sparkling in the ruddy firelight. An easy chair, carved and gilded, and cushioned in azure velvet, stood by the table; and near my lady's plate lay the letters and papers the morning's mail had brought.

A toy of a clock on the low marble mantle

chimed musically ten as my lady entered. In her dainty morning negligee, with her dark hair rippling and failing low on her neck, she looked very young, and fair, and graceful. Behind her came her maid, a blooming English girl, who took off the cover and poured out my lady's chocolate.

took off the cover and poured out my lady's chocolate.

Lady Thetford sank languidly into the azure velvet depths of her fauteaul, and took up her letters. There were three—one a note from her man of business; one an invitation to a dinnerparty; and the third, a big official-looking document, with a huge seal, indo need of postmarks. The languid eyes suddenly lighted; the pale cheeks flushed as she took it eagerly up. It was a letter from India from Capt. Everard.

Lady Thetford sipped her chocolate, and read her letter leisurely, with her slippered feet on the shining fender. It was a long letter, and she read it over slowly twice, three times, before she laid it down. She finished her breakfast, notioned her maid to remove the service, and lying back in her chair, with her deep, dark eyes fixed dreamily on the fire, she fell into a reverte of other days far gone. The lover of her girl-hood came back to her from over the sea. He was lying at her feet once more in the long summer days, under the waving trees of her girlwas rying at her feet once more in the long summer days, under the waving trees of her girl-hood's home. Ah, how happy! how happy she had been in those by-gone days, before Sir Noel Thetford had come, with his wealth and his title, to tempt her from her love and truth. Eleven struck, twelve from the musical clock on the months and still lay lady as the strucks.

Eleven struck, twelve from the musical clock on the mantle, and still my lady sat living in the past. Outside the wintry storm raged on; the rain clamored against the curtained glass, and the wind worried the trees. With a long sigh my lady awoke from her dream, and mechanically took up the Tines newspaper—the first of the little heap.

"Vain' vain' she thought, dreamily; "worse than vain those dreams now. With my own hand I throw hock the heart that loved me. of

than vain those dreams now. With my own hand I threw back the heart that loved me: of my own free will I resigned the man I loved. ny own tree will I resigned the man I loved.
And now the old love, that I thought would die
in the splendor of my new life, is stronger than
ever—and it is nine years too late."

She tried to wrench her thoughts away and fix

them on her newspaper. In value her eyes wandered aimlessly over the closely-printed col-umns—her mind was in India with Capt. Everwandered aimiessity over the closety-printed colulmas—her mind was in India with Capt. Everard. All at once she started, uttered a sudden, sharp cry, and grasped the paper with dilated eyes and whitening cheeks. At the top of a colulm of "personal" advertisements was one which her strained eyes literally devoured.
"If Mr. Vyking, who ten years ago left a male infant in charge of Mrs. Martha Brand, wishes to keep that chil? out of the work-house, he will call, within the next five days, at No. 17 Waddington Street, Lambeth."

Again and again, and again Lady Thetford read this apparently uninteresting advertisement. Slowly the paper dropped into her lap, and she sat staring blankly into the fire.

"At last!" she thought, "at last it has come. I fancied all danger was over—that death, perhaps, had forestailed me; and now, after all these years, I am summoned to keep my broken promise!"

The luw of death had settled on her face; she

promise!"

The bue of death had settled on her face; she sat cold and rigid, staring with that blank, fixed gaze into the fire. Ceaselessly beat the rain; wilder grew the December day; steadily the moments wore on, and still she sat in that fixed trance. The ormula clock struck two—the sound aroused her at last, steadily the moments wore started trance. The ormula clock struck two—the sound aroused her at last, steadily setting her teeth. "I

must!" she said, setting her teeth. "I My boy shall not lose his birthright, come what may!

She rose and rang the bell-very pale, but icily she rose and rang the belt—very pair, out and calm. Her maid answered the summons. "Eliza," my lady asked, "at what hour does the afternoon train leave St. Gosport for Lon-

the attention of the don't would ascertain. In five minutes she was back.

"At half-past three, my lady; and another at

Lady Thetford glanced at the clock—it was a

quarter past two.
"Tell William to have the carriage at the door tell william to have the carriage at the door at a quarter past three; and do you pack my dressing-case, and the few things I shall need for two or three days' absence. I am going to London."

London."

Eliza stood for a moment quite petrified. In all the nine years of her service under my lady, no such order as this had ever been received. To go to London at a moment's notice—my lady, who rarely went beyond her own park gates! Turning away, not quite certain that her ears

had not deceived her, my lady's voice arrested

Send Mrs. Weymore to me; and do you lose

"Send Mrs. Weymore to me; and do you lose no time in packing up." Eliza departed. Mrs Weymore appeared. My lady had some instructions to give concern-ing the children during her absence. Then the governess was dismissed, and she was again alone.

alone. Through the wind and rain of the wintry storm, Lady Thetford was driven to the station, in time to catch the three-fifty train to the metropolis. She went unattended; with no message to any one, only saying she would be back in three days at the furthest.

In that dull household, where so few events ever disturbed the stagnant quiet, this sudder journey produced an indescribable sensation. What could have taken my lady to London at a moment's notice? Some preger to London at a moment's notice?

moment's notice? Some urgent reason it must have been to force her out of the gloomy sechu-sion in which she had buried herself since her husband's death. But, discuss it as they might, they could come no nearer the heart of the mystery.

CHAPTER VI.

GUY.

The rainy December day closed in a rainies

The rainy December day closed in a rainies night. Another day dawned on the world, sunless, and chilly, and overcast still.

It dawned on London in murky, yellow tog, on sloppy, muddy streets—in gloom and dreatness, and a raw, easterly wind. In the densely populated streets of the district of Lambeth, where poverty huddled in tall, gaunt buildings, the dismal light stole murkly and slowly over the crowded, filthy streets and swarming purleus.

the crowded, filthy streets and swarming purlieus.

In a small upper room of a large dilapidated
house, this bad December morning, a painter
stood at his easel. The room was bare and cold,
and comfortless in the extreme; the painter
was middle-aged, small, brown and shriveled,
and very much out at elbows. The dull, gray
light fell full or his work—no inspiration of
genius by any means—only the portrait, coarsely
colored, of a fat, well-to-do butcher's daughter
round the corner. The man was Joseph Legard,
scene-painter to one of the minor city theatrea,
who eked out his slender income by painting
portraits when he could get them to paint. He
was as fond of his art as any of the great, old
masters; but he had only one attribute in common with those immortals—extreme poverty;
for his salary was not large, and Mr. Legard
found it a tight fit, indeed, to "make both ends
meet."

So he stood over his work this dull morning.

found it a light lit, indeed, to "make both ends meet."

So he stood over his work this dull morning, however, in his fireless room, with a cheerful, brown face, whistling a tune. In the adjoining room he could hear his wife's voice raised shrilly, and the cries of half a dozen Legards. He was used to it, and it did not disturb him; and he painted and whistled cheerly, touching up the butcher's daughter's snub nose and fat cheeks and double chin, until light footsteps came running up-stairs, and the door was fining wide by an impetuous hand. A boy of ten, or thereabouts, came in—a bright-eyed, fair-haired lad, with a handsome, resolute face, and eyes of cloudless, Saxon blue.

"Ah, Guy!" said the scene-painter, turning round and nodding good-humoredly. "I've been expecting you! What do you think of Miss Jenkins?"

The boy looked at the picture with the glance

Miss Jenkins?"

The boy looked at the Dicture with the glance of an embryo connoisseur.

"It's as like her as two peas, Joe; or would be, if her hair was a little redder, and her nose a little thicker, and the freckles were plainer. But it looks like her as it is."

"Well, you see, Guy," said the painter, going on with Miss Jenkins' sleft eyebrow, "it don't do to make 'em too true—people don't like it; they pay their money, and they expect to take it out in good looks. And now, any news this morning, Guy?"

it out in good looks. And now, any news this morning, Guy?"

The boy leaned against the window and looked out into the dingy street, his bright, young face growing gloomy and overcast.

"No," he said, moodlity; "there is no news, except that Phil Darking was drunk last night and savage as a mad dog this morning—and that's no news, I'm sure!"

"And nobody's come about the advertisement in the Times?"

"No, and never will. It's all humbur what

ment in the 'I'mes!''
"No, and never will. It's all humbug what granny says about my belonging to anybody rich; if I did, they'd have seen after me long ago. Fhil says my mother was a housemaid.

and my fa glad to go valet, gran he'll turn I'd rather starve in with Phil The blu

them pass up with a "Has be Ellen are at's not! "It is he ly, "but k

ly, "but why you the rest—tion. Yo now; and than ever

with spa stop window. door. T then ope lightly or stately, d "Now Legard.

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morning, cheerful, adjoining e raised Legards. nrh touching touching e and fat footsteps was flung of ten, or ir-haired and eyes

turning think of e glance r would

plainer. r, going it don't like it; to take ws this

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and my father a valet—and they were only too glad to get me off their hands. Vyking was a valet, granny says she knows; and it's not likely he'll turn up after all these years. I don't care, I'd rather go to the work-house; I'd rather starve in the streets, than live another week with Phil Darking."

The blue eyes filled with tears, and he dashed them passionately away. The painter looked up with a distressed face.

"Has he been beating you again, Guy?"

"It's no matter—he's a brute! Granny and Ellen are sorry, and do what they can, but at's nothing. I wish I had never been born!"

"It is hard," said the painter, compassionately, "but keep up heart, Guy; If the worst comes, why you can stop here and take pot-luck with the rest—not that that's much better than starvation. You can take to my business shortly, now; and you'll make a better scene-painter than ever I could. You've got it in you."

"Do you really think so, Joe?" cried the boy, with sparkling eye. "Do you? I'd rather be an artist than a king— Halloo!"

He stopped short in surprise, staring out of the window. Legard looked. Up the dirty street came a handsome cab, and stopped at their own door. The driver alighted, made some inquiry, then opened the cab-loor, and a lady stepped lightly out on the curb-stone—a lady, tall and stately, dressed in black and closely veiled.

"Now, who can this visitor be for?" said Legard. "Peop is not in this neighborhood ain't in the habit of having morning calls made on them in cabs. She's coming up-stairs!

He held the door open, listening. The lady secended the first flight of stars, stopped on the landing, and d."

"For granny!" exclaimed the boy. "Joe, I shouldn't wonder if it was some one about that advertisement, after all!"

Martha Brand." exclaimed the boy. "Joe, I shouldn't wonder if it was some one about that advertisement, after all!" "Neither should I," said Legard. "There! she's gone in. You'll be sent for directly, Guy!" Yes, the lady had gone in. She had encountered on the landing a sickly young woman with a baby in her arms, who had stared at the name she inquired for.

reed on the landing a sickly young woman with a baby in her arms, who had stared at the name she inquired for.

"Its. Marthay, if you please, ma'am."

She opened the door, and ushered the veiled lady into a small, close room, poorly furnished. Over a smouldering fire, mending stockings, sat an old woman, who, notwithstanding the extreme shabbiness and poverty of her dress, lifted a pleasant, intelligent old face.

"A lady to see you, mother," said the young woman, hushing her fretful baby and looking curiously at the veiled face.

But the lady made no attempt to raise the envious screen, not even when Mrs. Martha Brand got up, dropping a respectful little servant's courtesy and placing a chair. It was a very thick veil—an impenetrable shield—and rothing could be discovered of the face behind it but that it was fixedly pale. She sank into the seat, her face turned to the old woman behind that sable screen.

"You are Mrs. Brand?"

The voice was refined and patrician. It would have told she was a lady, even if the rich garments she wore did not.

"Yes ma'am—your ladyship; Martha Brand."

"And you inserted that advertisement in the years ago?"

Mother and daughter started, and stared at the

years ago?" Mother and daughter started, and stared at the

years ago?"
Mother and daughter started, and stared at the speaker.
"It was addressed to Mr. Vyking, who left the child in your charge, by which I infer you are not aware that he has left England."
"Left England, has he?" said Mrs. Brand. "More shame for him, then, never to let me know or leave a farthing to support the boy!"
"I am inclined to believe it was not his fault," said the clear, patrician voice. "He left England suddenly and against his will, shad, I have reason to think, will never return. But there are others interested—more interested than he could possibly be—in the child, who remain, and who are willing to take him off your hands. But first, why is it you are so anxious, after keeping him all these years, to get rid of him?" "Well, you see, your ladyship," replied Martha Brand, "it is not me, nor likewise Ellen there, who is my daughter. We'd keep the lad and welcome, and share the last crust we had with him, as we often have—for we're very poor people; but, you see, Ellen, she's martied now, and her husband never could bear Guy—that's what we call him, your ladyship—Guy, which it was

Mr. Vyking's own orders. Phil Darking, her husband, never did like him somehow; and when he gets drunk, saving your ladyship's presence, he beats him most unmereiful. And now we're going to America—to New York, where Phil's got a brother and work is better, and he won't fetch Guy. So, your ladyship, I thought I'd try once more before we deserted him, and put that advertisement in the Times, which I'm very glad I did, if it will fetch the poor lad any friends."

There was a moment's pause: then the lady

glad I did, if it will fetch the poor lad any friends."

There was a moment's pause; then the lady asked, thoughtfully: "And when do you leave for New York?"

"The day after to-morrow, ma'am—and a long journey it is for a poor old body like me."

"Did you live here when Mr. Vyking left the child with you—in this neighborhood?"

"Not in this neighborhood, nor in London at all, your ladyship. It was Lowdean, in Berkshire, and my husband was alive at the time. I had just lost my baby, and the landlady of the hotel recommended me. So he brought it, and paid me thirty sovereigns, and promised me thirty more every twelvemonth, and told me to call it Guy Vyking—and that was the last I ever saw of him."

"And the infant's mother?" said the lady, her volce changing perceptibly—"do you know anything of her?"

"But very little," said Martha Brand, shaking her head. "I never set eyes on her, although she was sick at the inn for upward of three weeks. But Mrs. Vine, the landlady, she saw her twice; and she told me what a pretty young creeter she was—and a lady, if there ever was a lady yet."

"Then the child was born in Berkshire—how

her twice; and she told me what a pretty young creeter she was—and a lady, if there ever was a lady yet."

"Then the child was born in Berkshire—how was it?"

"Well, your ladyship, it was an accident, seeing as how the carriage broke down with Mr. Vyking and the lady, a driving furious to catch the last London train. The lady was so hurted that she had to be carried to the lnn, and went quite out of her head, raving and dangerous like. Mr. Vyking had the landiady to wait upon her until be could telegraph to London for a nurse, which one came down next day and took charge of her. The baby wasn't two days old when he brought it to me, and the poor young mother was dreadful low and out of her head all the time. Mr. Yyking and the nurse were all that saw her, and the doctor, of course; but she didn't die, as the doctor thought she would, but got well, and before she came right to her senses Mr. Vyking paid the doctor and told him he needn't come back. And then, a little more than a fortnight after, they took her away, all sly and secret-like, and what they told her about her poor baby I don't know. I always thought there was something dreadful wrong about the whole thing."

"And this Mr. Vyking—was he the child's

was something dreadful wrong about the whole thing."

"And this Mr. Vyking—was he the child's father—the woman's husband?"

Martha Brand looked sharply at the speaker, as if she suspected she could answer that question best herself.

"Nobody knew, but everybody thought who. I've always been cf opinion myself that Guy's father and mother were gentiefolks, and I always shall be."
"Does the boy know his own story?"

the grayish pallor which overspread it at sight of

"So like! So like!" the lady was murmuring between her set teeth. "It is terrible—it is mar-

netween ner set teeth. "It is territie—It is mar-velous!"

"This is Guy, your ladyship," said Martha Frand. "I've done what I could for him for the last ten years, and I'm almost as sorry to part with him as if he were my own. Is your ladyship going to take him away with you now?"

part with mim as it he were my own. Is your ladyship going to take him away with you now??

"No," said her ladyship, sharply; "I have no such intention. Have you no neighbor or friend who would be willing to take and bring him up, if well paid for the trouble? This time the money shall be paid without fail."

"There's Legard's," cried the boy, eagerly. "I'l so Legard's, Fanny. I'd rather be with Joe than anywhere else."

"It's a neighbor that lives up-stairs," murmured Martha, in explanation. "He always took to Guy and Guy to him in a way that's quite wonderful. He's a very decent man, your ladyship—a painter for a theatre; and Guy takes kindly to the business, and would like to be one himself. If you don't want to take away the boy, you couldn't leave him in better hands."

"I am glad to hear it. Can I see the man ?"

"I am glad to hear it. Can I see the man?"
"I'll fetch him!" cried Guy, and ran out of
the room. Two minutes later came Mr. Legard, the room. I we minutes after came Mr. Legard, paper cap and shirt-sleeves, bowing very low to the grand, black-robed lady, and only too delighted to strike a bargain. The lady offered liberally; Mr. Legard closed with the offer at

once.
"You will clothe him better, and you will clucate him and give him your name. I wish him to drop that of Vyking. The same amount I give you now will be sent you this time every year. If you change your residence in the meantime, or wish to communicate with me on any consemence, you can address

time, or wish to communicate with me on any occurrence of consequence, you can address Madam Ada, post office, Plymouth."
She rose as she spoke, stately and tall, and notioned Mr. Legard to withdraw. The painter gathered up the money she laid on the table, and bowed himself, with a radiant face, out of

and bowen numeri, who is the room.

"As for you," turning to old Martha, and taking out of her purse a roll of crisp, Bank of England notes, "I think this will pay you for the trouble you have had with the boy during the last ten years. No thanks—you have earned the money."

the money."
She moved to the door, made a slight, proud gesture with her gloved hand in farewell, took a last look at the golden haired, blue eyed, handsome boy, and was gone. A moment later and her cab rattled out of the murky street, and the

her cab rattled out of the murky street, and the trio were alone staring at one another, and at the bulky roll of notes. "I should think it was a dream only for this," murmured old Martha, looking at the roll with glistening eyes. "A great lady—a great lady, surely! Guy, I shouldn't wonder if that was your mother."

CHAPTER VII.

COLONEL JOCYLN.

Righter and mother were gentlefolks, and I always shall be."

"Does the boy know his own story?"

"Yes, your ladyship—all I've told you."

"Where is he? I should like to see him."

Mrs. Brand's daughter, all this time hushing her baby, started up.

"I'll fetch him. He's up-stairs in Legard's, I know."

She left the room and ran up-stairs. The painter, Legard, still was touching up Miss Jenkins, and the bright-haired boy stood watching the progress of that work of art.

"Guy! Guy!" she cried breathlessly, "come down-stairs at once. You're wanted."

"Who wants me. Ellen?"

"A lady, dressed in the most elegant and expensive mourning—a real lady, Guy; and she has come about that advertisement, and she wantsto see you."

"What is she like, Mrs. Darking?" inquired the painter—"young or old?" inquired the painter—"young or old?"

"Young, I should think; but she hides her face behind a thick veil, as if she didn't want to be known. Come, Guy.

She hurried the lad down-stairs and into their little room. The veiled lady still sat talking to the old woman, her back to the dim daylight, and that disguising veil still down. She turned slightly at their entrance, and looked at the boy through it. Guy stood in the middle of the floor, his fearless blue eyes fixed on the hidden face. Could be have seen it he might have started at

Jocyln; and one day electrified his housekeeper by setter announcing his intention of returning to England with his little daughter Alie un for good. That same month of December, which took Lady Thetford on that mysterious London journey, brought this letter from Calcutta. Five months after, when the May primross and bysamonths after, when the May primross and bysamonths after, when the May primross and bysamonths after, when the find the primross and bysamonths after the property of the p

lands, Colonel Jocyin and his little daughter came home.

Early in the day succeeding his arrival, Colonel Soviet he present the bright agring sunshine, as the property of the sunshine, as the sunshine of the sunshine of the present high road between cynin Hall and Therford Towers. He had met the late Sir Noel and his bride once or twice previous to his departure for India; but there had been no ac-quaintance sufficiently close to warrant this speedy

uaminance sumciently close to warrant this speedy call.

Lady Thetford, sitting alone in her toudoir, looked in surprise at the card the servant brought. "Colonel Jooyin," she said, "Idid not even know he had arrived. And to call so soon—ahl perhaps he fetches me letters from India."

She rose at the thought, her pale cheeks flushing a little with expection. Mail after mail had arrived from that distant land, bringing her no letter from Captain kverard.

Lady Thetford descended at once. She had few callers; but she was always exquisitely dressed and ready to receive at a moment's notice. Colonel Jooyim—tall and sallow and soldierly—rose at her entrance.

and ready to receive at a momental notice. Colonel Joseph and ready to receive at a momental notice. Colonel Joseph and ready to receive at a momental notice. Colonel Joseph and ready to receive at a momental notice. Colonel Joseph and ready to receive at a momental notice. Colonel Joseph and ready and re

and brave as a lion. Many, many nights we have lain with the stars of India shining on our bivouace whilst he talked to me of you, of England, of his daughter.

The state of the stars of the stars of the stars a string she was althing gazing steadfastly out of the window at the sparkling sunshine, and Colonel Jocyln sould not see her face.

"He was as glorious a soldier as ever I knew," the colonel went on; "and he died a soldier's dath—shot through the heart. They buried him out there with military honors, and some of his men cried on his grave like children;"

There was another blank pause. Still Lady Thetford sat with that faxed gaze on the brilliant May "It is a sad thing for his poor little girl," the Indian officer said, "she is fortunate in having such a guardian as you, Lady Thetford."

Lady Thetford awoke from her trance. She had been in a trance, and the years had slipped backward, and she had been in her far-off girthood's home, with George Everard, her handsome, impetuous lover, by her side. She had loved him then, even when she said no and married another; she loved him still, and now he was dead—dead! But of her visitor with a face that told nothing."

"I am so sorty—so very, very corry, My poor"
"I am so sorty—so very, very corry, My poor"
"I am so sorty—so very, very corry, My poor"

nothing.
"I am so sorry—so very, very sorry. My poor little May! Did Captain Everard speak of her, of me, before he died?"
"He died instantaneously, my lady. There was no time."

"He died instantaueously, my away, no time."
"Ah, nol poor fellow! It is the fortune of war—but it is very sad."
That was all; we may feel inexpressibly, but we can only utter commonplaces. Lady Thetford was very, very pale, but her pallor told nothing of the dreary pain at her heart.
"Would you like to see little May! I will send to her."

"Would you like to see little May! I will send for her."
Little May was sent for and came. A brilliant little fairy as ever, brightly dressed, with shimmering golden curls and starry eyes. By her side stood Sir Rupert—the nine-year-did hornet, growing tail very fast, paie and slender still, and looking at the colonel with his mother's dark, deep

Colonel Jocyln held out his hand to the flaxen haired fairy. haired fairy.
"Come here, little May, and kiss papa's friend.
You remember papa, don't you?"

"Yes," said May, sitting on his knee contentedly.
"Oh, yes! When is papa coming home? He said in main with the book of dolls and picture books. It was not been contented to the content of the content o

or doins and picture-books. Is he coming home?

"Not very soon," the colonel said, inexpressibly touched; "but little May will go to hap some day. Thetford.

"Yes," nodded May, "that's mamma, and Rupert's mamma. Oh! I am so sorry pap isn't coming home soon! Do you know "-looking up in his face with blg, shining, solemn eyes—"I're got a face with blg, shining, solemn eyes—"I're got a complete by the shining solemn eyes—"I're got a complete by solemn eyes—"I're got a complete by the shining solemn eyes—"I'r

"And Alleen wants a mother, and the little baronet a father," he thought, complacently; "my lady can't do better."

So next day at the earliest possible hour, came have been considered broneyed outstocking little girl, as tail, every inch, as Sir Rupert. A little embryo patrical, with pride in her infantile lineaments already, an uplitted poise of the graceful head, a light, elastic step, and a softly-modulated voice. A little lady from top to toe, who opened her little bods, and obstreperousness, generally, of little fary. There were two or three children from the recory, and half a dozen from other families in the neighborhood—and the little birthday feast was under the charge of Mrs. Weymore, the governess, pale and pretty, and subdued as of old. They summer house, to the music of plashing fountains (amboled in the garden, and had tea in a fairy summer house, to the music of plashing fountains—and little May was captain of the band. Even shy, still Alleen Jocyln forgot her youthful dignity, and raced and laughed with the best.

It was so nice, papal "she cried "purcualy." It was so nice, papal "she cried "purcualy." It was so nice, papal "she cried "purcualy, and raced and laughed with the best of the part o

Summer waned. It was October, and Lady Thetford began talking of leaving it. Gosport for a season; her health was not good, and change of air was recommended. "I can leave my children in charge of Mrs. Wey-more," she said. "I have every confidence in ber-and she has been with me so long. I think I shall depart next week; Dr. Gaie says I have delayed too long."

depart next week; Dr. Gale says I have delayed too long."

Col. Jooyln looked up uneasily. They were sitting alone together, looking at the red October sunset blazing itself out behind the Devon hills.

"We shall miss you very much," he said, settly. Something in his tone struck Lady Thetford. She turned her dark eyes upon him in surprise and sudden alarm. The look had to be answered, rather embarrassed, and not at all so confident as he thought he would have been, Col. Jooyln asked Lady Thetford to be his wif. Then,

"I am very sorry, Col. Jocyln, I never thought film."

"I am very sorry, Col. Jocyln, I never tuougus of this."

He looked at her, pale—alarmed.
"Does that mean no, Lady Thetford?"
"It means no, Col. Jocyln. I have never thought of you save as a friend; as a friend I still wish to retain you. I will never marry. What I am to-day I will go to my grave. My boy has my whole heart—there is no room in it for anyone else. Let us be friends, Col. Jocyln," holding out her white Jeweled hand, "more, no mortal man can ever be to me,"

CHAPTER VIII.

cled hand, "more, ho mortal man can ever be to me."

CHAPTER VIII.

YEARS came and years went, and thirteen passed says, in all these years with their countless says, in all these years with their countless can be comparatively speaking, of course; Mrs. Weymore, the governess, Mrs. Hilliard, the house. Comparatively speaking, of course; Mrs. Weymore, the governess, Mrs. Hilliard, the house-keeper, Mr. Jarvis, the butler, and their minor satellites, served there still, but its mistress and her youthful soon had been absent. Only little May had reported to a finishing school.

Lady Thetford came herself to the Towers to Paris to a finishing school.

Lady Thetford came herself to the Towers to Paris to a finishing school.

Lady Thetford came herself to the Towers to Paris to a finishing school.

The little baronet had gone to kino, thence to Oxford, passing his vacation abroad with his mamma—and St. Gosport had seen nothing of them. Lady Thetford had thought it best, for many reasons, to the continents, and the seen coling of them. Lady Thetford had thought it best, for many reasons, to wanderings. She missed the child, but she had every confidence in Mrs. Weymore. The old aversion had entirely worn away, but time had taught her she could trust her implicitly; and though May might miss "mamma" and Rupert, it was not in very deeply to heart.

Joeyin Hall was vacated, too. After that refusal of Lady Thetford, Col. Joeyin had left England, placed his daughter in a school abroad, and made a tour of the East.

Joeyin Hall was vacated, too. Weymore, her vice-roy, and to her steward, issuing her orders for the expected return. Thetford were to return early in the roring to take up their abode once more in the old hower, and Col. Joeyin announced his how the sum of the county for a grand ball. Thetford Towers was to be completely rejuvenated—new furnished, painted and decorated. Landscape gardeners were set at which the county for a grand ball. Thetford Towers was to be completely rejuvenated—new furnished, painted and de

"If I coul "If I could thought, "I carth to des She giand of lights, ar sparkling je center of ar handsome the courtly cyln, helres ulous beaut and as ancie and as anci future, my thought; forth? Ab! it would rui Yes, Lady his characte

his characte wary a com not she, had stantly toge and grace was the one she never se and would happiness. doing the w It seemed ized. Sir F love for all the grand s even as his was like th

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ty, rosy gi ling jewel becks and special de of Thetfor But the greetings strewn pic Aileen Jo Aileen Joe beauty. It tipathy to kind, and der white miration. mother he heiress of stiret, to

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ge of Mrs. Wey-nfidence in her; I think I shall I have delayed

y. They were be red October Devon hills, he said, softly.

ady Thetford, in surprise and be answered; so confident as i. Joeyin asked

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hirteen passed heir countless en a deserted f course; Mrs. ard, the house-heir minor sat-istress and her y little May had arge until with-too, had gone

the Towers to thirteen years, bugh, rambling villa on the growing daily unthern clime, thence to Oxtube the second of them. Lady any reasons, to and during her me had taught and though May the second of the secon

fter that refus-i left England, oad, and made ntil within the er son, spend-tered Col. and parted com-return early once more in ounced his in-

nore, her vice-orders for the vas to be com-, painted and were set at e to be ready

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d wan, and g within the yet fair and bes and jew- a queen. It of her heart, in the home ain that had

"If I could but see her his wife," Lady Thetford thought, "I think I should have nothing left on earth to desire."

She glanced anothing forms, and rich dresses, and folights, anwels, to where a young lady stood, the center of an animated group—a tall and eminently handsome girl, with a proud patrician face, and the courtly grace of a young empress—Alleen Jocyin, helress of fabulous wealth, possessor of fabulous beauty, and descendant of a race as noble "With her for his wife, come what might in the future, my Rupert would be safe," the mother thought; and who knows what a day may bring forth? Ah: If I dared only speak, but I dare not; it would ruin all. I know my son."

A real of the property of the same property

ness, and through the open French windows came the soft, misty moonlight and the saline wind. There they stopped, looking out at the pale glory of the night, and there Sir Rupert, about to ask the supreme question of his life, and with his heart beginning to plunge against his side, opened conversation with the usual brilliancy in such cases.

Miss Jocopin laughed frankly. She was of a nature far more impassioned than his, and she loved him; and she felt thrilling through every nerve in her body the prescience of what he was going to say; but, for all that, being a woman, she had the beet of it now.

It is not the sall fatigued, she said; and I like it. I don't think halls are bores—like this, I mean; but then, to be sure, my experience is very limited. How lovely the night is I look at the moonlight, yonder, on the sea—a sheet of silvery glory. Does it not recall Sorrento and the exquisite Sorrentine landscape—that moonlight on the sea? Are you not inspired, sir artist; radiant glance, a luminous smile, and then the star-like face drooped again—and the with the half with the said of the said

ward, doubt, recognition once.
"It is—it is!" she cried, "May Everard!"
"May Everard!" Sir Rupert echoed—"little

"May Everard!" "May Everard!"
"May Everard!" Sir Rupert echoed—"little May!"
"At your service, monsieur! To think you should have forgotten me so completely in a decade of years. For shame, Sir Rupert Thetford!"
And then she was in Aileen Jooyin's arms, and there was an hiatus filled up with kisse.
"Oh! what a surprise!" Miss Jocyin cried breathessyl. "Have you dropped, from the skies! I May Everard laughed, the calm, bright laugh of thirteen years ago, as she held up her dimpled cheeks, first one and then the other, to Sir Rupert.
"Did you? So I was, but I ran away." "Ran away! From school?" "Something very like! E. Oh! how stupld it was, and I couldn't endure it any longer; and I am so crammed with knowledge now that I! I held any come home; but I was sent for which was true, you know, for I felt an inward call; and as they were glad to be rid of me, they didn't make much opposition or ask unnecessary questions. And so," folding the fairy hands and nodding her little ringleted head, "here I am."
"But, good heavens;" orded Sir Rupert, aghast, "you never mean to say, May, you have come alone," and May, with another nod. "I'm lead to I we know, with I hast yeardin. Cane

leted head, "here I am."
"But, good heavens." oried Sir Rupert, aghast,
"you never mean to say, May, you have come
all alone," said May, with another nod. "I'm
used to it, you know; did it last vacation. Came
across and spent it with Mrs. Wewmore. I don't
mind it the least; don't know what sea-sickness is;
and ohi didn't some of the poor wretches suffer
this time! Isn't it fortunate I'm here for the ball!
"Thanks. I can't see that you have changed
much, Miss Everard. You are the same curlyheaded, saucy fairy I knew thirteen years ago.
What does my lady say to this escapade!"
"Nothing. Eloquent slence best expresses her.
"Nothing. Eloquent slence best expresses her.
"Nothing. Eloquent slence, the same curlyheaded, saucy fairy I knew thirteen years ago.
What does my lady say to this escapade!"
"Nothing. Eloquent slence best expresses her.
"Nothing. Eloquent slence best expresses her.
Are you going to ask me to dance, Rupert? because
if you are, "said Miss Everard, adjusting her bracelef, "you had better do it at once, as I am going
back to the ball-room, and after I once appear
there you will stand no chance amongst the
crowd of competitors. But then, perhaps you be"Not at all," Miss Jocyln interposed, hastily,
and reddening a little; "I am engaged, and it is
time I was back, or my unlucky cavalier will be at
its wit's end to find me.
She swept awa with a quicker movement than
sliquant little partner his arm. His notions of
propriety were a good deal shocked; but then
it was only May Everard, and May Everard was
one of those exceptionable people who can do
pretty much as they please, and not surprise any
in pink on the arm of the young baronet, chattering like a magpie. Miss Jocyln was very silent
and distrait all the rest of the night, and watched
furtively, but incessantly, the fluttering plus faitry.
She had regimed belie hitherto, but spectrag like
royal right. Sir Rupert had that one dance, and
no more—Miss Everard's own prophecy was truethe demand for her was such that even the son of
the louse

baronet for the remaining hours of the ball. She had known as well as he the words that were on his lips when May Everard interposed, and feer eyes inashed and her dark cheek flushed dusky red to see how easily he had been deterred from his purpose or him, he sought her once or twice in urpose or him, he sought her once or twice in the post of the control of the c

CHAPTER IX.

"HE meant to have spoken that night; he would have spoken but for May Everard. And yet that is two weeks ago, and we have been together since,

that he is the main, though shockingly lasy, no obeyeds. Do come, Aleen; there's a dear! Don't Miss Jocyln rose rather abruptly.

Miss Jocyln rose rather abruptly.

"I have no desire to be selfish, Miss Everard. If you will wait ten minutes whilst I dress, I will accompany you to Thetford Towers."

She rang the bell and swept from the room, stately and uplitted. May looked after her, fidgering a little.

Dear mell Jupp.se she's offended now at that Dear mell Jupp.se she's offended now at that Dear mell Jupp.se she's offended now at that Alleen Jocyln, and I'm afraid I never shall. I shouldn't wonder if she were jealous."

Miss Everard laughed a little silvery laugh all to herself, and slapped her kid riding-boot with her pretty toy whip.

"I hope I didn't interrupt a tender declaration that night in the conservatory, but it looked like it. If I did, I am sure Rupert has had fifty chances since, and alleed would be alleed with the greatest pleasure if she only though I suspected it, but I'm not so certain about him. He's a great deal too indolent in the first plage, to get "pa grand passion for anybody, and I thank he's inclined to look

graciously on me—poor little me—in the second. You may spare yourself the trouble, my dear pix Rupert; for a gentlemen whose other aim in existence is to smoke Turkish pipes and lie on the grass and write and read poetry is not at all the sort of mounted and rode off. Both rode well, and both looked their best on horseback, and made a wonderfully pretty picture as they galloped through \$1. Gosport in dashing style, bringing the admiring pretty picture as they galloped through \$1. Gosport in dashing style, bringing the admiring baps in the great front entrance to receive them, with a kindling light in his artist's eyes.

"May said she would fetch you, and May always keeps her word," he said, as he walked slowly up the sweeping staircase; 'besides, Alleen, and the great the great in the busy human live; so, to vindicate my character and cleave a niche in the temple of fame, I am going to immortalize myself over this puniting."

"Xou'll never flied it, 'said on a gigantie scale and with superhuman efforts, and you'll cool down and get sick of it before it is half finished, and it will go to swell the pile of daubed canvas in your stadio now. Don't tell me! I know you! I cool down and get sick of it before it is half finished, and it will go to swell the pile of daubed canvas in your stadio now. Don't tell me! I know you."

"And have the poorest possible opinion of me, "Yes, I have! I have no patience when I think what you might do, what you might become, and see what you are! If you were not Sir Rupert The. 'ford, with a princely income, you might be a great man. As it is—"

"As it is—" and willow the property of the great man. As it is—"

"As it is—" and willow the property of the great man. As it is—"

"As it is—" and willow the property of the great man. As it is—"

"Yes," said Miss Jocyln, coldly and briefly. She did not like the conversation, and May Everard's great man. As it is—"

"As it is—" and willow the picture, whise the property is to trouble yourself of the way from the property of the property of th

away the glass, "there is no necessity for lying down. Don't wear that seared face, May—it was nothing, I assure you. Go on with what you were saying, Rupert."

"What I was say "ig? What was it?"

"About this yo_ g artist's resemblance to the Thetfords."

"Oh! wall there."

"About lwss say "g? What was it?"
About hils yo. g artist's resemblance to the "Control of the list you get artist's resemblance to the "Control of the list you get and you were Damon and Pythias over again during my stay in Rome. I always do fraternize with those sort of fellows, you know; and I left lim in Rome, and he promised, if he ever returned to England—which he wasn't so sure of—he would run down to Devonshire to see me and my painted annestors, whom he resembles so strongly. That places we will commence on the Rosamond and Eleanor. Mother, sit here by this window if you want to play propriety, and don't talk."

But Lady Thetford chose to go to her own room, and her son gave her his arm thither and left her lying back amongst her cushions in front of the fire. It was always chilly in those great and somewhat gloomy rooms, and her ladyship was always could be consumed the seem of the control of the fire. It was always chilly in those great and somewhat gloomy rooms, and her ladyship was always could be a suitable over her painfully beating heart. "It is destiny, I suppose," whet hought, bitterly; "let me banish him to the farthest end of the earth; let me keep him in poverty and obscurity all his life, and when the day comes that it is written, Guy Legard will be here. Sooner or later the vow I have broken to Sir Noel's heir will have his own."

CHAPTER X.

ASKING IN MARRIAGE

AFING IN MARRIAGE.

A Fing burned in Lady Thetford's room, and among piles of silken pillows my lady, languid and paie, lay, looking into the leaping fiame. It was a hot July morning, the sun blazed like a wheel of fire in a sky without a cloud, but Lady Thetford was always chilly of late. She drew the crimson shawl she wore closer around her, and glanned impatiently now and then at the pretty toy clock on the decorated chimney-pleee. The house was very still, its one disturbing element, Miss Everari, was the sunny Devry hills.

"How long they stay, and these solltary rides are so dangeronal on what will become of me if it is too late, after all! What shall I do if he says no?"

If it is too late, after all! What shall I do if he says no?"
There was a quick man's step without—a moment and the door opened, and Sir Rupert, "booted and spurred" 'from its ride, was bending over his mother, or sent for me after I left. What is Louise says you are not worse?"

"Louise says you are not worse?"

"Louise says you are not worse?"

"Louise says you are not worse?"

"Left brown hair with tender touch, and gazed in the handsome face, so like her own, with eyes full of unspeakable love.

"My boy! my boy!" she murmured, "my darling Rupert! Oh! it is hard, it is bitter to have to leave you!"

"Mother!" with a quick lock or alarm, "what is it? Are you worse!"
"No worse, Rupert; but no better. My boy, I shall never be better again in this world."

shall never be better again in this world."

"Mother-"
"Mother-"
"Hush, my Rupert-wait; you know it is true; and but for leaving you I should be clad to go. My life has not been so happy since your father died, that I should greatly cling to it.

"But, mother, this won't do; these morbid fancies are worst of all. Reeping up one's spirits is half the battle. blid; I meroly state a fact—a fact which must preface what is to come. Rupert, I know I am dying, and before we part I want to see my successor at Thetford Towers."

"My dear mother!" amazedly.

"Rupert, I want to see Alieen Joeyin your wife. No, no; don't interrupt me, cut believe me, I dislike match-making quite as cordially as you do; but my days on earth are numbered, and I must speak before it is too late. When we were abroad we returned home I thought so, too. Rupert, I have ceased to think so since May Kverard's return."

Turn."
The young man's face flushed suddenly and hotly, but he made no reply.

The young man in his senses could possibly prerect How any man in his senses could possibly prerect How any to Alleen, is a mystery I cannot solve; but
the May to Alleen, is a mystery I cannot solve; but
the May to Alleen, is a mystery I cannot solve; but
the May to Alleen, is a mystery I cannot solve; but
the Man was to Man was to the Man was the Man was to the Man was turn." The young man's face flushed suddenly and hot-

it. But she is not suited to you—she is not th woman you should marry."

Sir Rupert laughed—a hard strident laugh.

"I think Miss Everard is much of your opinion, my lady. You might have spared yourself all these fears and perplexities, for the simple reason that J shall be shall b

Rupert: Rupert: Nay, mother mine, no need to wear that frightened face. I haven't asked Miss Everard in so many words to marry me, and she hasn't declined with thanks, but she would if I did. I saw enough with the mother state of the law energy of blank consternation.

"I care for her very much, mother; and I haven't owned to being absolutely in love with our pretty little May. Perhaps I care for one a much as the other; perhaps I know in my immost heart she is the one I should marry. That is, if she will marry me."

me."
"You owe it to her to ask her."
"Do I? Very likely; and it would make you happy, my mother?"
He came and bent over her again, smiling down in her wan, anxious face.
"More happy than anything else in this world, Rupert!"

"More happy than anything else in this world, Ruperti"
"Then consider it an accomplished fact. Before the sun sets to-day Alleen Jocyin shall say yes or 10 to your son."
He bens and kissed her; then, without waiting for her to speak, wheeled round and strode out of the apartment.

There is nothing like striking whilst the iron is hot in the young man to himself, with a grim of the young man to himself, with a grim of the young man to himself, with a grim the young man to himself, with a grim the young man to himself, with a grim of the young man to himself, with a grin the young and your young the young the young was not you have young the young th

"No; I am going to Joeyin Hall. Perhaps I shall fetch Aileen back."

fetch Alleen back."

May's turquoise blue eyes were lifted with a sudden luminous, intelligent flash to his face.

God speed you! You will certainly fetch Aileen

May's turquoise blue eyes were lifted with a sudden iuminous, intelligent flash to his face.

"God speed you! You will certainly fetch Alleen back!"

"You have up best with a smile that told himshe knew all as plainly as he knew it himself.

"You have my best wishes, Rupert, and don't linger, I want to congratulate Alleen."

"You have my best wishes, Rupert, and don't linger, I want to congratulate Alleen."

Sir Rupert's response to these good wishes was very brief and curt. Miss Everard watched him mount and ride off, with a mischlevous little smile rippling round her rosy lips.

"My lady has been giving the idol of her ex."

"My lady has been giving the idol of her ex."

"My lady has been giving the idol of her ex."

"My lady has been giving the idol of her ex."

"My lady has been giving the idol of her ex."

"My lady has been giving the idol of her ex."

"My lady has been giving the idol of her ex."

"My lady has been giving the idol of her ex."

"My lady has been giving the idol of her ex."

"My lady has been giving the idol of her ex."

"My lady lady lady and has face and has a lady in anxious and fidgeted to death about it; and—

"Miss Evernad stopped with a shrill, feminine shriek. She had loitered down to the gates, where a young man stood talking to the lodge-keeper, with a big Newfoundland dog gamboling ponderously about him. The big Newfoundland made an instant dash into Miss Everard's guard of honor, with one deep, hass bark, like d'stant hunder, and which effectually drowned the yelps of the power of the properties of the

inserview, now uare you! Call off your dog, sir, this instant! Don't you see how he is frightening mine!"

She turned imperiously to the Newfoundland's master, the bright eyes flashing, the plink cheeks master, the bright eyes flashing, the plink cheeks "Down, Hector!" like the well-trained animal he was, subsiled instantly. "I beg your pardon, young lady! Hector, you stir at your peril, sir! I am very sorry he has alarmed you."

He doffed his cap with careless grace, and made the angry little lady a courtly bow.

"He didn't alarm me," ropled May, testily; "he started back with this exclamation and stared broadly. A tall, powerful-looking young fellow, rather dusty and travel-stained, but eminently gentlemanly, with frank blue eyes and profuse fair hair, and a handsome, candid face.

"Yes, Miss May," struck in the lodge-keeper, "it beg your pardon," said May, becoming conscious of her wide stare, "but it your name Legard, and are you a friend of Sir Rupert Thetford!"

"Yes, to both questions," with a smile that May liked. "You see the resemblance too, then. Sir

"Yes, to both questions," with a smile that May liked. "You see the resemblance too, then. Sir Rupert used to speak of it. Is he at home?" "Not just now; but he will be very scon, and I know will be giad to see Mr. Legard. You had better come in and wait." "And Hector," said Mr. Legard. "I thinkli had better leave him belind, as ee him sying your guard of honor with anything but a friendly eya guard of honor with anything but a friendly grant of honor with anything with the same properties."

face, "Sir yours as a and knew Miss Eve versation Lady The who form Mr. Legar letter of r over. Ma letter of r over. Ma Rupert's f about so dawdled a racades, i about Sir and the ti onversati hour followatch at I found, to h "What waghast." aghast. aghast, "luncheon h Mr. Legard Mr. Legard The ho

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th about it; and—

a shrill, feminine o the gates, where the lodge-keeper, amboling ponder-pandland made an s guard of honor, stant thunder, and yelps of the poo-selzing the New-him back with all ids.

nin back with au ids. d May, with flash-off your dog, sir, whe is frightening

e Newfoundland's g, the pink cheeks her wrath. her wrath. cell-trained animal beg your pardon, t your peril, sir! I bu." s grace, and made ow.

May, testily; "he ear mel how very

ne young man, had hation and stared lng young fellow, d, but eminently eyes and profuse id face. 'it lough like Sir Noel, n!"

ay, becoming con-is your name Le-Sir Rupert Thet-

h a smile that May nee too, then. Sir ne at home?" e very scon, and l

ed. "I think II had bee him eying your but a friendly eye, of addressing his y at her surprised

face, "Sir Rupert showed me a photograph of yours as a child. I have a good memo. I for faces, and knew you at once."

Miss Everard and Mr. Legard fell easily into conversation at once, as if they had been old friends, who form their likes and dislikes at first sight, and Mr. Legard's face would have been a pretty sure letter of recommendation to him the wide world over. May liked his looks; and then he was Sir Rupert's friend, and she was never over particular about social forms and oustoms; and so they dawlied about the grounds and through the leafy about social forms and oustoms; and so they dawlied about the grounds and through the leafy about sir Rupert and Rome, and art and artists, and the thousand and one things that turn up in conversation; and the moments slipped by, half hour followed half hour, until May Jerked out her watch at last, in a sudden fit of recollection, and found, to her consternation, it was past two. What will manima sayl' wired the young lady, Mr. Legard. I had no idea it was half so late."

Mr. Legard, I had no idea it was half so late."

Mr. Legard, I had no idea it was half so late."

"The honesty of that speech is the highest flattery my conversational powers ever received, Miss Everard. I am very much obliged to you. Alt by For riding slowly up under the sunlit trees came the young baronet. As Mr. Legard spoke, his flance fell upon them, the young lady and gentleman advancing so confidentially, with half a dozen ourly poodles frisking about them. To say Sir Rupert stard would be a mid way of puting it—his eyes opened in wide wonder.

"Theiroff My dear, Sir Rupert!"

The baronet leaped off his borse, his eyes lighting, and shook hands with the artist, in a burst of beartiness very rare with him.

"Where in the werld did you drop from, and how under the sun did you oome to be like this with him."

May blushing a little under Sir Rupert's glance, "whilst I go and see mamma, only precuising that monohen hour is past, and you had better not linger."

She tripped away, and the two young men followed more slowly into the house. Sir Rupert led his friend to his studio, and left him to inspect the

lowed more slowly into the house. Sir Rupert led his friend to his studio, and left him to inspect the pletures.

"Whils I speak a word to my mother," he said; "Whils I speak a word to my mother," he said; "It will detain me hardly an instant; "Jon't have been a said; "All right," and in Legard, boyishly. "Don't harry ourself by a cooper so had left hereful as if she had hardly stirred since. She looked up and half rose as he came in, her eyes painfully, intensely anxious. But his face, grave and quiet, told nothing.

"Well." she panted, her eyes glittering. "Well." she panted, her eyes glittering. "Well." the panted, her eyes glittering. "It is well, mother. Alleen Jocyin has promised to become my wife."

"Thank God!" and had been seen that the standard characteristic steady gravity—none of the rapture of an accepted lover there. "You are content, nother?" "More than content, Rupert. And you?" "He smiled and, stooping, kissed the warm, pallid face. "I would and steoping, kissed the warm, pallid face." I'would and steoping, kissed the warm, pallid face. "I would and steoping, kissed the warm, pallid face." I'would and steoping, kissed the warm, pallid face. "I would and steoping, kissed the warm, pallid face." I'would and steoping, kissed the warm, pallid face. "I'would and steoping, kissed the warm, pallid face." I'would and steoping, kissed the warm, pallid face. "I'would and steoping, kissed the warm, pallid face." I'would and steoping, kissed the warm, pallid face. "I'would and steoping with me. And now I must leave you, if you will not go down to luncheon."

"I think not; I am not strong to-day. Is May walting?" I think not: I am not strong to-day. Is May

"I think not; I am not stong to waiting?"
"More than May. A friend of mine has arrived, and will stay with us for a few weeks," and will stay with us for a few weeks," a Lady Thetford's face had been flushed and Eager, but at the last words it suddenly blanched.
"A friend, Rupert! Who!"
"You have heard me speak of him before," he said, carelessly; "his name is Guy Legard."

CHAPTER XI.

ON THE WEDDING EVE.

ON THE WEDDING EYE.

THE family at The ford Towers were a good deal surprised, a few hours later that day, by the unexpected appearance of Lady The ford at dinner. Wan as some spirit of the moonlight, she came softy in, just as they entered the dining-room, and her son presented his friend, Mr. Legard, at once

e. His resemblance to the family will be the surest once.

"His resemblance to the family will be the surest passport to your favor, mother mine." Sit Hupert passport to your favor, mother mine. 'Sit Hupert and recolled with a shrick, as though she had seen a ghost. Extraordinary, isu't ti—this chance resemblance!

"Extraordinary," Lady Thetford said, "but not at all unusuit. Of course, Mr. Legard is not even at all unusuit. Of course, Mr. Legard is not even extraordinary she will be supported by the said of the said that the said of the said o

ly, with no identifying strawberry mark on my arm. Who my parents were, or what my real name is, I know no more than I do of the biography of the man in the moon.

The man is the moon.

The man is the moon of stonishment—May and Rupert vividly interested, Lady Thetford white as a dead woman, her eyes averted, her hand trembling as if palsied.

"No," said Mr. Legard, gravely, and a little sadify," I stand as totally alone in this world as a humber of the said of the said

voice failing, "that she may have been my mother."

There was a sudden clash, and a momentary confusion. My lady, lifting her glass with that shaking hand, had let it fall, and it was shivered to atoms on the floor.

"And you never saw the lady after?" May askedere. Legard received regular remittances, mailed, oddly enough, from your town here—Plymouth. The lady told him, if he ever had occasion to address her—which he never did have, that I know of—to address Madam Ada, Plymouth! He brought me up, educated me, taught me his art and died. I was old enough then to comprehend my position, and the first use I made of that knowledge was to return! Madam Ada. her remittances, with a few sharp lines that effectually put an end to hers."

"Have you never tried to ferret out the mystery of your birth and this Madam Ada?" inquired Sir

with a very consistent of the mystery of your birth and this Madam Adar" inquired Sir Rupert.

Mr. Legard shook his head.

Now thy should If I dare say I should have Now thy should If I dare say I should have Now thy should If I dare say I should have Now thy should If I dare say I should have Now thy should If I dare say I should have the construction of the should have the construction of the construc

over."

Mr. Legard smiled, but was grave again directly,

"It is oid—odd—very odd!"

"Yes," said May Everard, with a sagacious nod;
"a great deal, too, to be a chance resemblance,
Hushi here comes Rupert. Well, how have you left

"a great deal, too, to be a chance resemblance. Hushi here comes Rupert. Well, how have you left mamman?" Louise is with her. And now to finish dimert have an engagement for the evening."

Sir Rupert was strangely silent and distrait all through dinner, a darkly thoughtful shadow glooming his ever pale face. A supposition had inshed across his mind that turned him hot and cold by turns—a supposition that was almost a cerrainty. This striking resemblance of the painter! Legard to his dead father was no freak of nature; but a retributive frootdence revealing the truth of his birth. It came back to his memory with painfully acute olearness that his mother had sunk a posen of a velled lady—Madam Ada, Plymouth, her address. Could his mother—his—be that mysterious arbiter of his fate? The name—the place. Sir Rupert Thetford wrenched his thoughts, by a violent effort, away, shocked at himself.

"It cannot be—it cannot!" he said to himself usselong the said to himself uses of the memory of the dead, a

treason to the living. But I wish Guy Legard had

treason to the hiving. But I wish Guy Legard had "The come here."

"The come here."

"The cone here."

"The cone here."

"The coverness. Mrs. Weymore had never even seen the late Sir Noe! that anyone knew of, an. 'yet she had recoiled with a shrill, feminine cry of utter of the cone of the late Sir Noe! that anyone knew of, an. 'yet she had recoiled with a shrill, feminine cry of utter of the late Sir Noe! had anyone knew of, an. 'yet she had recoiled with a shrill, feminine cry of utter of the late Sir Noe! "Mrs. Weymore." Miss Everard remarked, with her great, brith eyes suspiciously keen; "you never knew Sir Noe!."

Mrs. Weymore sunk down on a lounge in a violent tremor and faintness.

Oh, May!" with a sudden, sharp.-v., losing self-control, "who is that young man!"

"Why, Mr. Guy Legard, artist," answered May, composedly, the bright eyes still on the alert. 'formerly—in boyhood's sunny bours,' you know."

"Yyking!" with a spasmedic or.'; Ind."

"Weymore dropped her white face in her hands, trembling from head to foot.

"Well, upon my word," Miss Everard said, addressing empty space, "this does cap the globel "Weymore dropped her white face in her hands, trembling from head to foot.

"Well, upon my word," Miss Everard said, addressing empty space, "this does cap the globel for the control of the contro

physician, summoned down from London, confirmed my lady's own fears.

"Her life hung by a thread," this gentleman said, confidentially to Sir Rupert, "the slightest excitement may snap it, at any moment. Bont contradict her—let every thing be as she wishes. Nothment may snap it, at any moment. Bont contradict her—let every thing be as she wishes. Nothment may snap it, at any moment bont contradict her—let every thing be as she wishes. Nothment in the shear she wishes and she wishes. Which is a shear she wishes a shear she wishes a shear she wishes a shear she wishes a shear shear she wishes a shear shear

He turned his fair, resolute face to that lady with a smile hard to resist.
"I don't make much of a howling about my af-fairs, you know, Mrs. Weymore," he said; "but for all that, I am none the less interested in myself and my history. If you can open the mysteries a sed my history. If you can open the mysteries a result of the mysteries and a server respect. And I am positive from your look you can."

Mrs. Weymore turned away, and covered her face with a sort of sob. The young lady and gentleman exchanged startled glances.

"You can then?" Mr. Legard said, gravely, but you can then?" Mr. Legard said, gravely, but To his boundless construction Mrs. Weymore rose up and fell at his feet, selzing his hands and covering them with kisses.

"I do! I do! I know who you are, and so shall you before this wedding takes place. But before! bell you I must speak to Lady Thetford."

Mr. Legard raised her up, its race as control her own.

"To Lady Thetford! What has Lady Thetford to do with me?" She know who you are as well be the control of the contro

see wat until then."
She rose up to go, so haggard and deploring-looking, that neither strove to detain her. The young man stared blankly after her as she is the wat least 12 hours.

"At last!" he said, drawing a deep breath, "at last! shall know!"

last I shall know!"
There was a pause; then May spoke in a flutterlag little voice.
How very strange that Mrs. Weymore should
brow, of all persons in the world."
Who is Mrs. Weymore? How long has she
been here? Tell me all you know of her, Miss Everard."

been here? T-il me all you know of her, Miss Everard."

"And that 'all' will be almost nothing, She ame down from London as a nursery-governess to Rupert and me, a week or two after my arrival here, selected by the rector of St. Gosport. She area to the state of th

menal there.

The marriage was to take place in the village shurch; and there was to follow a grand ceremonial of a wedding-breakfast; and then the happy pair were to start at once on their brital-tour.

"And I hope to see my boy return," Lady Thetford said, iffse'ng him fondly. "I can hardly ask for more than that."

Late in the afternoon of that crentful weddingeve, the expoverness sought out Guy Legard, for in the young baronet's studio, with May, putting in the young baronet's studio, with May, putting the finishing touches to that young lady's portrait. He started up at sight of his visitor, vividly interested. Mrs. Weymore was paler even than uscal, but with a look of deep, quiet determination on her face no one had ever seen there before.

"I have come to keep my promise," Mrs. Weymore answered; but I must speak to my lady first. I wanted to tell you that, before you sleep to-night, you shall know."

I there was there we have the promise, and first. Sir Rupert was dining at Jooyin Hall, Lady Thetford was alone in high spirits, and Mrs. Weymore was admitted at once.

"I wonder how long you must wait?" said May Everard.

"I wonder how long you must wait?" said May Everard.
"Heaven knows! Not long, I hope, or I shall go mad with impatience."
An hour passed—two—three, and still Mrs. Wey-more was closeted with my lady, and still the pair in the studio waited.

CHAPTER YII

MRS. WEYMORE'S STORY.

MRS. WEYNORE'S STORY.

LADY THEFFORD SAI UP BULLONG her pillows and looked at her hired deper dent with wide open eyes of astonishment. he I, le, timid face of Mrs. Weymore wore a look aflogether new.

"Listen 12 your story! My dear Mrs. Weymore, what possible interest can your story have for me?"

me?"
"More than you think, my lady. You are so much stronger to day than usual, and Sir Rupert's marriage is so very near that I must speak now or never!"

much stronger to-day than usual, and Sir Rupert's marriage is so very near that Z must speak now or never.

Sit of own with Sir Rupert's "Sir Rupert's "I was a widow with Sir Rupert's "You will bear." Mrs. Weymore said, very sadly, "Heaven knows I should have told you long ago; but it is a story few would care to tell A cruel and shameful story of wrong and misery; for, my lady, I have been cruelly wronged by one who was once very near to you."

Lady Thetford turned saken white.

My lady, listen, and you shall hear. All those years that I have been with you, I have not been what I seemed. My name is not Weymore. My name is Thetford—as yours is.

"My lady, listen, and you shall hear. All those years that I have been with you, I have not been what I seemed. My name is not Weymore. My name is Thetford—as yours is.

"I was a widow when I came to you," Mrs. Weymore went on to say, "but long before I had known that worst widowhood, desertion. I ran away from my happy home, from the kindest father ard mother that ever lived! I ran away and was married and deserted before lave, as eighteen the same and the same a

iather and mother that ever lived: I ran away and was married and deserted before I was eighteen years old.

"He came to our village, a remote place, my lady, with a local celebrity for its trout streams, and for nothing else. He came, the man whom I married, on a visit to the great house of the place. We not not be supported to the place of the place. We not not be supported to the place of the place of the place of the place. We not not supported to the place of the

and I have the marriage certificate nervia my possession."

Mrs. Weymore touched; bosom as she spoke, and looked with earnest, truthful eyes at Lady Thetford. But Lady Thetford's face was averted and not to be seen.

Mrs. as a seen was as faceting as all his familiarity for long enough and reckless enough whilst it lasted to make him forget all consequences. For it was surely a reckless act for a gentleman, such as he was, to marry the daughter of a village schoolmaster.

"There was but one witness to our marriage—my husband's servant—George Vyking. I never liked the man; he was erafty, and cunning, and treacherous, and ready for any deed of evil; but

he was in his master's confidence, and took a house for us at Windsor and lived with us, and kept his master's secrets well."

Mrs. Weymore paused, her hands fiuttering in painful unrest. The averted face of Lady Thotford never turned, but a smothered voice bade her go

paintin unuse. The avoiced voice bade her go never turned, but a smothered voice bade her go on the control of the control of

him, either. When you find last winter's enow, last autumn's partridges, then you may hope to find him.

"But I am his wife, I sale," nothing can undo that—his lawful, wedded wife.

"Yes, sald Vyking," his wife fast enough; but there's the law of divorce, and there's no witness but me silve, and you can do your best; and the best you can do is to take it easy and submit. He'll provide for you handsomely; and when he gots the divorce, if you like, I'll marry you my-self, and grown to expect you my-self.

best you can do is to take it easy and submit. He'll provide for you handsomely; and when be gets the divorce, if you like, I'll marry you myself, that grown to expect some such revelation, I had grown to expect some such revelation, I had been neglected so long. My lady, I don't speak of my feelings, my anguisn'and shame, and remorse and despair—I only tell you here simple facts. But in the days and weeks which followed, I suffered as I never oan suffer again in this world.

"I was he'd little better than a prisoner in the green grown of the provided of the suffered as a livery can be that I would one day outsets to marry him. More than once I tried to run away, to get on the track of my betrayer, but always to be met and folied. I have gone down on my knees to that man vyking, but I might as well have knelt to a status of stone.

"I consented readily enough. My one hope now was to find the man who had wronged me, and in London" thought's stood a better chance than at the content of the sufficient of sufficient of the sufficient of the sufficient of sufficient of sufficient of sufficient of sufficient of sufficient of sufficien

understand if I told you—only a wow.

"Couldn't you be coased?"

"No."

"Don't be too sure, Perhaps I could tell you something might move you, quiet as you are. What if I told you your baby did not die that time, but if I told you your baby did not die that time, but if I told you ten baby did not die that time, but his man, tears and entreaties thrown away. I heard his last words and started to my feet with outstretched hands.

"Vyking, for the dear Lord's sake, have pity on a desolate woman, and tell me the truth."

"I am telling you the truth. Your boy is alired and the day you appear in court against Sir Noel, that day he shall be restored to you. Now don't you ge

and gee excided wheeled to cide on who we will be some of the cide of the cide

A noost is down-y-alk to the control of the control

the ceasel
light.
"Come
thought—
posedly as
The do
peared, ar
"Papa!"
"Bad n
Read that
The not

"DEAR Poor Lad morning nearly dis Pray com

Affect biling. "Dead! "It is v bly unfor time. A "Ou! p

e, and took a house us, and kept his

ands fluttering in e of Lady Thetford roice bade her go

I still lived in the
ne now. My puny; two or three
sband of his childthoroughly repent
—he never tried to
grew longer and
it, until at last he
yking, the valet,
d me the truth—
it I was never to

mad young man's and he's repented You'll never see leedn't search for st winter's snow, you may hope to

fast enough; but here's no witness our best; and the easy and submit. ely; and when he

Il marry you mysuch revelation, I
lady, I don't speak
i shame, and reyou here simple
ss which followed,
gain in this world
a prisoner in the
d I think Vyking
ould one day cononce I tried to run
y betrayer, but alwe gone down on
out I might as well

he said, 'we'll go ig to look and talk ow to mind their

ow to mind their
My one hope now
ronged me, and in
er chance than at
after that I bardg time.
ered. Then
at died. I li sa
d died. I li sa
suffered so m. h
at ulled and blunted.
to trust him or be
to act, and so
ered. The chance the
ered to del.
ered to del

rable, fistless lan-orn out.
rooms in a furious ter had quarreled.
Vyking had been valet tore up and ing passion.
or my name's not because he's mar-ow. But there's a my; and I'll have the's back from

but very quietly.

n my husband?'
usband now,' said
a again, my girl.
The ford Towers,
I call on his pretty
nome,'

call on his pretty come." out of the window d at me curiously, re we; and we're ke a scene? Now I you'll come for of bigamy?'

think you would

s I could tell you t as you are. What lie that time, but

than useless with thrown away. I I to my feet with

sake, have pity on he truth.' Your boy is alive d him Guy—Guy he's all safe; and inst Sir Noel, that Now don't you go

and get excited; think it over, and let me know your deision when Loome back."

"He left he room before I could answer, and I never
aw Vyking again. The next day, reading the morning
the name of the chief was deorge Vyking, late valet to
sir Noel Thetford. I tried to get to see him in prison,
but failed. He trial came, on, his sentence was transpormy secret with him.

I had something left to live for now—the thought of
I had something left to live for now—the thought of
I, who had not a penny in the wide world. If I had had
the means, I would have come to Devonshire to seek out
the man who had so basely wronged me; but as I was, I
butter, litter time, that long, hard struggle with starstore—a time t chills my blood even now to look back
"I was till in London, butting with strim poverty."

bitter, bitter time, time young the property to look used to be the control of the property was still in London, battling with grim poverty, when, as months later, I read in the Times the awfully sudden death of Sir Noel Thetford, Baronet.

"My lady, i an not speaking of the effect of that blow is the property wronged as myself. Tou with the property with the property with the property with the property of the truth then; surely he acknowledged the great wrong he had done you?"

Mrs. Weymore patient, white face, for the first time, to know you have truth with the face, the property with the face with the property with the face, the property with the face with the property with the property

Mrs. Weymore paused, and Lady Thetford turned her face, her ghastly, white face, for the first time, to answer.

Thank God! Oh, thank God! And he acknowledged his first marriage?

Yes, the wring he did you was venial to that which will be the self-with the self-will be the self

young man—that Guy Logard—you know he is your son? h
"I knew it from the first. My lady, you will let me tell him at once, will you so?? And Sir Rupert? Oh, my him at once, will you so?? And Sir Rupert? Oh, my Lady Thetford covered har face with a groan.
"I promised his father on hid eath-hed to tell him long ago, to seek for his rightful helf—and see how I have Repeated to the him of the seek of the rightful helf—and see how I have the man at the seek."

"I promised his father on hid eath-hed tof! It was not running the seek of the rightful helf—and see how I have been."
"But now—oh, my dear lady! now you will?"
"But now—oh, my dear lady! now you will?"
"But now—oh, my dear lady! now you will?"
"But now—oh, my dear lady! now you put you want to have you will you will you will you will you want to have you will you will have seek him to have you will have held in the seek of the my him to will have a hard to have you will have held to have you will have held to have you will have held to hav

CHAPTER XIII.

CHAPTER XIII.

"THERE IS MANY A SLIP."

A ROOM the was like a picture—a carpet of roce-build size and the state of the sta

the censeries sea was an arginer with sparking dul-la, Come in, Miss doorly and, It was ner maid, she thought—and she walked over to an arm-chair and com-posedly sat down.

The door opened, and Coi. Joeyin, not Fanchon, ap-peared, an open note in his hand, his face full of trouble, "Pepal" Alleen cried, starting up in aiarm.
"Bad news, my daughter—very bad1 very sorrowful! Read that."
The note was very brief, in a spidery, female hand.

"DEAR COL. JOOYLN:—We are in the greatest trouble. Poor Lady Thetford died with awful suddenness this morning in one of those dreafful spanna. We are all searly distracted. Rupert bears it better than any of us. Pary come over as soon as you can. MAY EYRARAD."

Alleen Jocyln sunk back in her seat, pale and trem

bing.
"Dead! Ob, papal papa!"
"It is very sad, my dear, and very shocking; and terriby unfortunate that it should have occurred just at this the present the present of the control of the

me! Poor Lady Thetford! Poor Rupert! You will go over at once, papa, will you nos?"
"Certainly, my dear. And I will tell the servante, so the when one quests arriver you may not be disturbed to the when one day later. A postlored marriage is the most about the part of the part of the control of the contro

It was late in the afternoon before Col. Jocyth returned. He strode straight to his daughter's presence, wearing a pale, fagged 'leaden' asked, faintly, "My pale Alleen!" he said, kissing her fondly; "my prior, patient girl! I am sorry you must undergo this make," killen when the said is the said with the sai

irial, and," knitting his brows, "such talk as it will make."
"Don't think of me, papa-my share is surely the lightest. But Rupert.—" wistfully failering.

"Bon't think of me, papa-my share is surely the lightest. But Rupert.—" wistfully failering.

When the state of the state

only "Personed" and the painter the relative what is name—"
"" Legard, page 7" the turns out to be the sen of Mrs. Weymore, they discovered it is stugits. He was there in the
room, with the most dazed and mystified and altogether
bewildered expression of countenance I ever saw a man
of the painter of the property of the proventies of the
country of the property of the proventies of the proventies
to this Everard. There's something mysterious in the
about starting family secrets that had come to light, and
the opinion of the proventies of the proventies
to discovered the proventies of the proventies
to discovere the proventies of the proventies of the proventies
that the proventies of the proventies of the proventies
that the proventies of the proventing the proventies of the proventies of the proventies of the prov

odd!"
Col. Joeyin rumbled on as he walked the floor, his brows
knitted into a swarthy frown. His daughter sat and eyed
him wistfully.
"Did no one ask for me, papa? Am I not to go

knitted into a swarthy frown. His daughter sat and eyed him wistfully no one ask for me, papa? Am I not to go over 70 no one ask for me, papa? Am I not to go over 70 no one ask for you days Everard did, and I promised to fetch you to-morrow. Alleen, things at 4 not promised to fetch you to-morrow. Alleen, things at 4 not promised to fetch you to-morrow. Alleen, things at the fetch of the fetc

thought, with a frown: "very bad taste on the part of Sir Rüpert. I shall speak to him on the subject presently stood in silence beside his daughter, looking down at the marble face. May, shireting dreavily in a large shaw), and looking like a wan little spirit, was speaking in wilhopers to Alleen.

The sharp shaw is sharp sharp sharp shaw in the spirit, was speaking in wilhopers to Alleen.

The sharp sha

CHAPTER XIV

PARTED.

CHAPTER XIV.

PARTED.

HALF AG, hour had passed.

Up and down the long drawing-room Alleen wandword almiessly, oppressed with a dread of she knew not what, stoom of the rainy evening was not darker than that brooding shadow in her deep, dusky eyes.

In the library Col. Jocyin stood facing his son-halaw forced in the library Col. Jocyin stood facing his son-halaw collection of the rainy evening was not darker than that brooding shadow in her deep, dusky eyes, the chelly half light coming through the order window by which he stood, fell full upon the face of Rupert The-choly, half light coming through the order window by which he stood, fell full upon the face of Rupert Theory and affright, what is this you are telling me? "The truth, Col. Jocyin—the simple truth. Would to wrong-doing and misery!" "The truth, Col. Jocyin—the simple truth. Would to wrong-doing and misery!" I don't comprehend—I can't comprehend this impossible tate, Sir Rupert."

"Do you mean to say you credit this wild story of a realy belief the stood of the stood

St. C-sport; the usy asser, huganate actor, posses, or a control of the control o

"And Alleen?" Col. Jocyln's face turned dark and rigid as from as he spoke his daughter's name. Rupert Thetford turned away his changing face, quite

"And Alleen?" Col. Jooyin's face turned dark and rigid as from as he spoke his daughter's name.
Rupert Thetford furned away his changing face, quite his his property of the p

ng status the mante, and nooming at them with very spectral eyes.

May uttered a faint cry; Guy faced him almost flercely.

"Going away! What do you mean, Sir Rupert? We are going away tosether, if you like."

"No, I go alone. You remain here; it is your place

"Not I go alone. Low retails a work."

"Never!" cried the young artist—"never! I will go out and die like a dog, in a ditch, before I rob you of your stable on the stable of the stable

and die like a dog, in a ditch, before I rob you of your britright!

who have robbed you, unwittingly, for too many years. I who have robbed you, unwittingly, for too many years. I promised my mother on her death-bed, as she promised ny father on his, that you should have your right, and I will keep that promise. Guy, dear old ribowl don't let so long. Take what is your own; the world is all before ne, and surely I am man enough to win my own way. Not one other word; you shall not come with me; you might as well talk to these stone walls and try to move "Alone!" It was May who breathlessly repeated the word.

in the actions. The norrow Lev, and go alone. "Alone!" It was May who breathlessly repeated the word.
"Alone! It was May who breathlessly repeated the word.
"Alone! All the ties that bound me here are broken; I go alone and single-handed to fight the battle of life of the control of the con

CHAPTER XV. APTER FIVE VEARS.

Monytiour failing like a divery veil over Venice—acrystal clear crescent in a purple sky shimmering on pal-sec and prison, churches, aguares and canals, on the gliding gondoias and the flitting forms passing like noiseless andows to and froe, from a window of a vast Venetian hotel, gasing thoughtfully at the silver-lighted landscape, so strange, so unreal, so dream-like to her unaccustomed eyes. A young lady, stately and tail, with a pale, proufface, and a stateague sort of beauty that was perfect in a state of the stat

"Oh! gay we row where full tides flow! And bear our bounding pinnace; And leap along where song meets song, Across the waves of Venice."

Across the waves of Yenice."

Are since, a tail young man, with a florid face and yellow aide whiskers, an unnistakable son of the "right little, titch little" sland, paused in his nong, as another man, stept; g through an open window, struck him an siry, siedey-shammer siap on the back, and the last comer.

"I ought to know that voice," and the last comer.
"Sacrifure, my lad, how goes if ring the outstretched hand in a genuine English grip, "happy to meet you, old boy, in the land of romance! La Fabre fold me you were coming, but who would look for you so soon? I thought you were dusing four-ento?"

"Got meet of florewist," and Stafford, taking his army a walk up had down his plasses," there's a fewer here,

too—quite an epidemic—malignant typhus. Discretion is the better part of valor where Sorrento fevers are con-"When did you reach Venice?" asked Mortimer, light-ing a cigar.
"An hour ago; and now who's here? Any one I

"Manuschia and the state of the

taste. Jamin'r Maes Jovyn infinitescy-jak as 140 the macre."
"Whet was that story I heard once, five years aco, about a broken engagement." Want Thetford of that lik the above engagement. Years the trought of the like the his title and estate to a mysteriously-found elder brother, you know. The story raing frough the papers and the clubs at the time like wildire, and set the whole country and broke off them. She was engaged to him, went take, and broke off them. She was engaged to him, went take, ""So goes the story—but who knows? I reculiert that def affair prefet by well; it was like the melodramas on def affair prefet by well; it was like the melodramas on to the story of the story

title and estates. By the way, it wonder what ever became of Inin? In all Series of Inin? In all Series of Inin? In the dence you did!. What was he doling there? "The dence you did!. What was he doling there?" "The dence you did!. What was he doling there?" "The word of the project of the with whom he stopped. I just discovered he was in the place as I was about to leaver. He had fallen very low, I fancy, it appears to the store of the word in the place as I was about to leaver. He had fallen very low, I fancy, it appears to the store of the word in the sound of the word in a gone against him. Rather had on him to lose fortune, there are who would go with their pligthed husbands to beggary; but I suppose the lovely Alleen is not one of them."

there are well of the proposed the lovely Allene I manda in the them."

"And so you left him III of the fever? Poor fellow!"
"And so you left him III of the fever? Poor fellow!"
"Dangerously III."
"The whom he is will take very little care of him he's as good as dead. Let us go in—I want to have a look at the latest English papers."

The two men passed in, out of the monolight, of the passe watcher in the trailing black robes, scarcely heeding them at first, had grown more and more absorbed in the careless conversation. Site caught her breath in quiek, pressed themselves tight over the throbbing heart. As they went in off the balcony she slid from her seat and held up her clasped hands to the luminous night say, and held me and ded in wrecking a noble heart—hear me, and help me to keep my yow! Loffer my whole III en atonement for the cruel and wicked past. If he cles, I shall go to my grave.

Her voice failered and died out, her face drooped forward on the window-sill, and the flashing monolight fell like a benediction on the bowed young head.

CHAPTER XVI. AT SOBBENTO.

THE low light in the western sky was dying out; the bay of Naples lay rosy in the haze of the dying day, and on this scene an invalid, looking from a window high up on the sca-washed cliff at Sorrento, gazed languidly.

For he was surely an invalid who sat in that wind the form the sate of the state of

The invalid opens his great, oark eyes in women and speaks.

"Yes, sir; an English lady sir, dressed in black, and a wearing of a thick veil. She asked for Mr. Rupert Thetford as soon as she seeme, as plain, as plain, sir—and then same back—a wild, eager light lift in the bollow eyes.

"Let her come in; I will see her?"
The man disappeared; there was an instant's pause, then a tall, sender figure, draped and veiled in black, entered a lone.

a fall, slender figure, arapea and venes.

Joseph State of the control of the con

ipert!" was on her knees before him, lifting her supplian "Rupert;"
She was on her knees before him, lifting her suppliant hands,
"Forgive me! Forgive me! I have seemed the most heartless and cruel of women! But I, too have suffered, and have and unworthy; but, ohl, forgive me, If you family have and unworthy; but, ohl, forgive me, If you family have and unworthy; but, ohl, forgive me, If you family have a supplied to the supplied to th

can!"
The old love, stronger than death, shone in her eyes, plead in her passionate, sobbing voice, and went to his

plead in her passionate, sobbing voice, and went to his very heart.

A have been he wetched, as wretched all these miser-al have been been expected, as wretched all these miser-ial have been been been all the services of the services of the history of the services of the services of the services of the history of the services of the services of the services of the lost to me and to the world. Only by the increast accident I heavy in Verlies you were here, and III—dying. I lost no time; 1 - anne Hibber 24 seeds, hopfug sgrains hope to find

you alive. Thank God I did come! Oh, Rupert! Ropert! for the sake of the past, forgive me!"
"Forgive yon!" and he tried to raise her. "Aileen—darling!"

"Forgive you?" and ne tree to take so.

arting." arms encircled her, and the pale lips pressed.
His wanter kiese on the tear wet race.
So, whilst the red glory of the sunset lay on the sea, and
till the silver stars spanged the sky, the reunited lovers
and the silver stars spanged the sky, the reunited lovers
when the silver stars spanged the sky, the reunited lovers
to be silver stars spanged the sky, the reunited lovers
to be silver stars spanged the sky, the reunited lovers
to be silver the silver stars spanged the sky, the reunited lovers
to be silver to

"How long since you lett Enganur Anders and the length, learn ago, poor page aldel in the south of France. You mustn't blame him too much, fupert."
"My deareat, we will talk of blaning no one. And Guy and May are married? I knew they would be." it in the Times; tory ou know May and I never corresponded—she was frantically angry with me. Do they know you are here?"

No. I rarely write, and I am constantly moving about, I know Guy is very much beloved in St. Gesport. We fig bo back to England one of these days, my derling, and re them the greatest surprise they have received since Guy Thetford learned who he really was." I care to five filled the since the control of the control of

berg as wen. I tensor by measurements and of the "And you will go back? Oh, Rupert! it needed but this to complete my happiness!"
He drew her closer, and then there was a long, delicious silence, whilst they watched together the late-rising moon climbing the unisty hills above Castellamare.

CHAPTER XVII

AT HOME.

ANOTHER sumset, red and soft grassy terrace, lighting up with its crimson radiance the gray forers wrelling Eaglish mendows, waving take the gray forers of Thetord Towers.

In the porty, airy summer drawing-room, this red suntant the porty, airy summer drawing-room, this red suntant the porty, airy summer drawing-room, the red suntant the porty, airy summer drawing-room, the red suntant the porty, airy summer drawing-room, the red suntant properties of the p

a. Haipert, of course," Sir Guy suggests; and little Lacy Thetford pour. Thetford pour. Thetford pour. Thetford pour. Thetford pour. The service the compiliment. Shabby fellow! To keep wandering about the world as he does, and never to answer one's letters; and I sent him half a ream last time, if I sent him a sheet, telling all about baby, and asking the cloquence of a female Demos.—what you may gall the cloquence of a female Demos.—what you may gall him. And to think it should be all of no use! To think of not receiving a line in return! It is using me shamefully, and I don't believe I will call baby Rupert. "Oh, yes you will, my dear! Well, Smithers, what is it?"

inot receiving a line in return! It is using me shamefully, and I don't believe i will call baby Ruper.

To Mr. Smithers, the butter, stood in the doorway, with a very pale and startled face. as a lady-least ways a lady-and sent the start of the control of of

THE END.

A Book

THE

This both and a serial and do with a serial and do with a serial and do with a serial and the serial and plant for the serial and the se

The Areated in able pursus Farm ful and I may be ea hay elevatelod crush sorapers, a Aron are such a them are e mote be curing me one of the

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better the paper, an dred at mail post sold at \$1

o! Oh, Rupert! Rupert raise her. "Alleennd the pale line pressed ace. inset lay on the sea, and sky, the reunited lovers i Eve may have in the

In the south of France, , Rupert." , Rupert." using no one. And Guy tey would be." I when I read it in the ever corresponded—she Do they know you are

postantly moving about; ved in St. Gosport. We se days, my darling, and hey have received since really was." pright smile she remem-the beautiful, upturned

ere was a long, delicious her the late-rising moon stellamare.

ous, over swelling Eng-grassy terrace, lighting gray forest of Thetford

ggests; and little Lady

iment. Shabby fellowld as he does, and never thim hair a ream last thim hair a ream last all about baby, and ask, and coaxing him with what you may call of the coaxing him with the word of such as the coaxing his property.

od in the doorway, with lady—leastways a lady me theirselves!" y, still pale and startled dy on his arm, stood be-

om the young baronet,

impetuous little Lady st one, then the other, Il to one break it is no glad, Il tuper it im so glad, Guy, did you ever!" ier's hand, with bright ier's hand, with bright ier's hand, with bright er Thetford said. "A —and a Thetford from diather." Be you hadd ta man wered u were coming to an-any expected the man have expected the man sme! Do sit down and

, so like old times, and at Rupert and Alicen

n England?" Sir Guy a resume of those past cyln Hall?" will let us."

ow I am willing to be ed fondly at his wife, d May, Iall. We came at once —my wonderful little

enited friends sought en head off the pillow, ag the room. ad drowsily, "to think should be SIR NOEL'S

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